



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



TUESDAY — 8 Nov 2022

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HEADLINE	11/08 Can SPD chief end consent decree?
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SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/can-chief-diaz-spd-insider-end-seattles-federal-consent-decree/
GIST	<p>Seattle has a new police chief, appointed by Mayor Bruce Harrell to make good on his promise to end a decade of costly federal oversight of the city's Police Department.</p> <p>Now, as Adrian Diaz awaits City Council confirmation, the question is whether the 25-year department veteran, who previously served as the interim chief, is the right person for the job.</p> <p>Harrell's decision to pick Diaz as the SPD's permanent top cop runs counter to parting advice from the agency's former federal monitor, who oversaw a settlement agreement brought on by 2012 Department of Justice findings that officers routinely used excessive force and may engage in biased policing.</p> <p>Monitor Merrick Bobb retired in September 2020, expressing concerns about the department's direction and leadership in the wake of SPD's disastrous response to the racial justice protests that summer and the City Council's equally calamitous vote to defund the department — leading to the sudden resignation of the police chief at the time.</p> <p>The agency, Bobb said in a departing letter to city officials, needed to move quickly to restore public confidence and rebuild what was lost, "preferably under a new, well-experienced and progressive outside chief."</p> <p>Diaz, whose confirmation is scheduled to go to a City Council vote in January, fits part of that mold. But he's also a consummate insider who's spent his entire law enforcement career with SPD.</p> <p>And while Bobb's parting advice favored an outside chief to guide the department to compliance with the 100-paragraph settlement agreement — which includes revised use-of-force training and policies, as well as robust data collection — Diaz has the support of Harrell and Bobb's successor.</p> <p>"I didn't work under the assumption that either an outside person or an inside person made the most sense. I wanted the best candidate," Harrell said in an interview last week.</p> <p>Harrell said he understood why, at the beginning of the consent decree, the city would have benefited from an outside voice to "bring meaningful, significant ideas on situational change," but that didn't dictate his decision 10 years later.</p> <p>Diaz, for his part, said his history at the department is an asset, citing his overall leadership, recruiting efforts and outreach to communities that experience violence.</p> <p>"The Seattle Police Department had to hit a reset button after 2020 and I have been driving that change ever since," he said in an email.</p> <p>While the mayor formally conducted a national search for the next chief, he outwardly supported Diaz throughout the process and officially appointed him just three days after interviewing finalists in September.</p> <p>That may partly explain why just 15 people applied during the nationwide search, described by one member of the search committee as a "pretty mediocre bunch" from mostly smaller departments. The committee member spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the search process.</p> <p>Harrell considers Diaz a reliable leader with strong relationships within the force and community. He also praised Diaz's recruiting work, specifically the highly touted "Before the Badge" program, which trains prospective officers on the city's history and communities before they enter standard law enforcement training.</p>

But above all, Harrell says, he picked Diaz to lead the department out of the consent decree because he believes Diaz can rebuild community trust after the mandate is lifted.

“I think the next chapter is really, how do we build trust in all communities? How do I allow students [and] younger people — after they see all of the egregious conduct by many police departments throughout this country — to trust the department?” Harrell asked, noting that many Seattle communities need to “heal” before they can trust police.

“That’s the next step. And that’s the conversation that I know Chief Diaz can lead with me.”

Crucially, Harrell also believes the department is ready for that next step, asserting that the department’s use of force and systems for addressing uses of force are at levels that comply with the consent decree.

“I think we have the procedures in place — for early detection and for how we review force — to be out from under the consent decree,” Harrell said, noting that he has to make that case “more legally” to the current federal monitor, Antonio Oftelie.

Oftelie, meanwhile, said he thinks Diaz “is a good pick” at this point, with the department negotiating a new contract with the Seattle Police Officers Guild, because he seems to have the support of the rank and file and has encouraged compliance with the consent decree.

Even so, Oftelie said Diaz must address “cultural issues” holding the department back from reaching and then maintaining full compliance with the settlement agreement.

The city’s Office of Inspector General this spring cited similar cultural concerns over Diaz and his commanders’ failure to force compliance of state and local masking requirements during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in fines from the state Department of Labor and Industries.

Oftelie, a Harvard University fellow, said the rule of thumb in picking a police chief for a troubled department is that you want an outsider in the beginning — a “disrupter” — to shake things up and clear out the stagnant thinkers or entrenched opponents to change.

After things have settled, he said, a department might do better picking an insider familiar with and invested in reform “who can bring stability and some continuity to the position.”

Still, some critics believe Harrell should have picked an outsider to correct the SPD’s course after the department’s failures and controversies during the racial justice protests prompted by the 2020 murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis.

They say the SPD needs a disrupter, not a pacifier, to rebuild and lead the department out from federal oversight that’s cost taxpayers more than \$200 million over the past decade, according to city documents.

An internal chief brings baggage — in the form of longtime relationships and conflicts — that can “interfere with the ability to make clear decisions, especially when it comes to discipline, in the best interests of the department and the city,” said Mark McCarty, a Seattle lawyer who spent 20 years working within SPD.

“To put it simply, they do not like annoying and pissing off their friends,” said McCarty, who worked as the SPD’s human resources director and later as a union attorney representing officers facing discipline.

McCarty said it’s a critical time for change within the agency — and that while hiring an inside candidate for chief is “the easy answer,” an internal pick “comes with all kinds of risks.”

“Everyone wants to work with who they know, but policing is way different,” McCarty said. “We want someone who doesn’t have relationships that get in the way of making the right decisions, especially when it comes to discipline.”

Seattle's most recent disrupter was Kathleen O'Toole, a former Boston police commissioner hired in 2014 after a national search to replace a retiring John Diaz (no relation to Adrian), who had been an inside pick in 2009 as a longtime member of the SPD's command staff. John Diaz had been chief when the Justice Department opened its investigation into the SPD's use of force at the behest of community groups, the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington and then-U.S. Attorney Jenny Durkan.

O'Toole's administration had done most of the heavy lifting with the consent decree by the time she left in 2018, just weeks before U.S. District Judge James Robart for the first time found the SPD in "full and effective" compliance with the federal mandate. Had the city been able to maintain that status for two years, the consent decree would have been dissolved.

But the federal monitor and judge became concerned with the rank and file's ongoing resistance to reform, including a failed lawsuit filed by 100 officers challenging new restrictive use-of-force policies, and the City Council's inability to confront the police union over officer accountability — first in a new contract, then in a so-called "accountability ordinance."

Then, in 2019, Robart found the SPD had fallen partially out of compliance for reinstating through arbitration an officer O'Toole had fired for punching a drunken, handcuffed woman in the face in the back of his patrol car.

That stopped and reset the agency's two-year clock for clearing the consent decree.

After O'Toole's 2018 departure, it appeared Durkan, by then the mayor, was prepared to hire another outsider as chief. All three finalists were from outside departments, and the list excluded Deputy Chief Carmen Best, who had been O'Toole's No. 2, sparking sharp community criticism.

One of the finalists withdrew his application, however, allowing Best to join the finalists and eventually win Durkan's pick.

That left Best, a 26-year department veteran who, like Diaz today, had spent her entire law enforcement career at SPD, in command of the department when thousands of Seattle residents took to the streets to protest Floyd's murder.

By all accounts, the SPD made a dismal showing — using force and unconstitutional crowd-control tactics and weapons against nonviolent demonstrators, drawing rebukes from a federal judge and Seattle's communities of color. Best resigned after the protests, and the City Council ultimately abandoned its pledge to cut the department's funding by half. Diaz was appointed interim chief, tasked with righting the agency and rebuilding community trust.

More than two years later, the department remains the target of an ongoing review by the city Office of Inspector General, which in a sharply critical report last month said SPD and city leadership failures exacerbated policing problems during the protests, particularly during a 23-day takeover of several blocks on Capitol Hill.

Both Durkan and Best also are the focus of a King County Sheriff's Office criminal probe into possible public records law violations involving hundreds of deleted official text messages.

Diaz, meanwhile, said he's enacted significant change within the SPD since 2020 and is leading the agency's drive to an "innovative and relationship-focused public safety model firmly rooted in community policing."

He, like Harrell, holds that the department has met the requirements of the decree. What remains to be seen is when — or whether — Oftelie will draw the same conclusion.

	<p>“What this department needs are a steady hand and a period of calm so we can shore up basic public safety services,” Diaz said. “Despite our staffing crisis, dedicated officers keep doing the work, they have embraced progressive changes, and I maintain — as I always have — that I am the right person to lead us forward.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Gas prices higher on election day eve
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/11/07/aaa-gasoline-gasbuddy-biden-election/8731667836210/
GIST	<p>Nov. 7 (UPI) -- Retail gasoline prices in the United States continue to march slowly up to the \$4 per gallon mark, an increase that could create headaches for Democrats on the eve of Election Day.</p> <p>Travel club AAA listed a national average retail price of \$3.80 for a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline for Monday, a 4-cent-per-gallon increase from this time last week.</p> <p>Retail gasoline prices have been on a steady increase in the days leading up to midterm elections on Tuesday. Those prices account for the bulk of the increase in consumer-level inflation, which is lower than summer peaks but still high at 8.2% over the 12-month period ending in September.</p> <p>For just gasoline, inflation is running at 18.2% over the period. As one of the more ubiquitous signs of inflation, that's a concern for U.S. President Joe Biden and fellow Democrats given that the state of the economy is a major concern for U.S. voters.</p> <p>A survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted from Oct. 14 -Oct. 18 for NBC News found 48% of the respondents said they'd be voting with abortion rights and threats to U.S. democracy on their mind, while 46% said they were concerned about the cost of living.</p> <p>Biden is not on the ballot, though he's been busy stumping for his fellow Democrats. At a campaign event in the key battleground state of Pennsylvania, Biden during the weekend said that if energy companies invested more of their record-breaking profits into production, then gasoline prices might not be so much of a burden.</p> <p>Despite his efforts to curb prices, however, the commodities market is a global one that moves on issues out of the president's control. Speaking Friday, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre noted that Biden is indeed doing all he can.</p> <p>"This is a global challenge that we're seeing," she said of inflationary pressures in general. "It's not just happening here. This is happening globally."</p> <p>Inflation in the British economy was at 10.1% for the the12-month period ending in September, far higher than that of the United States. Across the border in Canada, meanwhile, gasoline prices translate to \$5.00 per gallon, just below the all-time U.S. high of \$5.02 per gallon from June.</p> <p>Patrick DeHaan, the senior petroleum analyst at price-watcher GasBuddy, said prices could be leveling off, however.</p> <p>"Just over half of the nation's 50 states saw gasoline prices rise last week, pulling the national average back up for the time being due to big jumps in the Great Lakes and continued increases in New England and mid-Atlantic states," he said. "For now, the rise in the Great Lakes, brought on by tight supply, has already started to ease, and declines should start again."</p> <p>Most of the states in the Great Lakes region, including battleground Michigan and Pennsylvania, are showing state averages of at least \$4 per gallon. Nationally, however, the Energy Department forecasts a national average of \$3.80 per gallon for the fourth quarter and \$3.57 per gallon for2023.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 China Covid outbreaks widen
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/china/guangzhous-covid-outbreak-deepens-more-lockdowns-loom-china-2022-11-08/
GIST	<p>BEIJING, Nov 8 (Reuters) - New coronavirus cases surged in Guangzhou and other Chinese cities, official data showed on Tuesday, with the global manufacturing hub becoming China's latest COVID-19 epicentre and testing the city's ability to avoid a Shanghai-style lockdown.</p> <p>Nationwide, new locally transmitted infections climbed to 7,475 on Nov. 7, according to China's health authority, up from 5,496 the day before and the highest since May 1. Guangzhou accounted for nearly a third of the new infections.</p> <p>The increase was modest by global standards but significant for China, where outbreaks are to be quickly tackled when they surface under its zero-COVID policy. Economically vital cities, including the capital Beijing, are demanding more PCR tests for residents and locking down neighbourhoods and even districts in some cases.</p> <p>The sharp rebound will test China's ability to keep its COVID measures surgical and targeted, and could dampen investors' hopes that the world's second-largest economy could ease curbs and restrictions soon.</p> <p>"We are seeing a game between rising voices for loosening controls and rapid spreading of COVID cases," said Nie Wen, a Shanghai-based economist at Hwabao Trust.</p> <p>Considering how the nationwide COVID curbs are crushing domestic consumption, Nie said he had downgraded his fourth-quarter economic growth forecast to around 3.5% from 4%-4.5%. The economy grew 3.9% in July-September.</p> <p>The rising case load dragged on China's stock markets on Tuesday, but shares have not yet surrendered last week's big gains.</p> <p>Investors see China's beaten-down markets as an attractive prospect as a global slowdown looms, and have focused on small clues of gradual change - such as more targeted lockdowns and progress on vaccination rates.</p> <p>"No matter how harsh the letter of the law is...there is a little bit more loosening," said Damien Boey, chief macro strategist at Australian investment bank Barrenjoey.</p> <p>NO FULL LOCKDOWN YET</p> <p>Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, reported 2,377 new local cases for Nov. 7, up from 1,971 the previous day. It was a dramatic jump from double-digit increases two weeks ago.</p> <p>Surging case numbers in the sprawling southern city, dubbed the "factory floor of the world", means Guangzhou has surpassed the northern Inner Mongolia city of Hohhot to become China's COVID epicentre, in its most serious outbreak ever.</p> <p>Many of Guangzhou's districts, including central Haizhu, have imposed varying levels of curbs and lockdowns. But, so far, the city has not imposed a blanket lockdown like the one in Shanghai earlier this year.</p> <p>Shanghai, currently not facing a COVID resurgence, went into a lockdown in April and May after reporting several thousand new infections daily in the last week of March.</p> <p>"We have been working from home for the past couple of days," said Aaron Xu, who runs a company in Guangzhou.</p>

	<p>"Only a few compounds have been locked up so far. Mostly we are seeing disruptions in the form of public transit services being suspended and compound security barring couriers and food delivery. And we have to do PCR tests every day."</p> <p>RISING CASES</p> <p>In Beijing, authorities detected 64 new local infections, a small uptick relative to Guangzhou and Zhengzhou, but enough to spark a new burst of PCR tests for many of its residents and a lockdown of more buildings and neighbourhoods.</p> <p>"The lockdown situation has continued to deteriorate quickly across the country over the past week, with our in-house China COVID lockdown index rising to 12.2% of China's total GDP from 9.5% last Monday," Nomura wrote in a note on Monday.</p> <p>Zhengzhou, capital of central Henan province and a major production base for Apple (AAPL.O) supplier Foxconn (2317.TW), reported 733 new local cases for Nov. 7, more than doubling from a day earlier.</p> <p>In the southwest metropolis of Chongqing, the city reported 281 new local cases, also more than doubling from 120 a day earlier.</p> <p>In the coal-producing region of Inner Mongolia, the city of Hohhot reported 1,760 new local cases for Nov. 7, up from 1,013 a day earlier.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Ukraine tough stance on talks w/Russia
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-urges-ukraine-be-open-talks-with-russia-washington-post-2022-11-06/
GIST	<p>KYIV, Nov 8 (Reuters) - Ukraine doubled down on its tough stance on negotiations with Russia on Tuesday, saying talks could only resume once the Kremlin relinquishes all Ukrainian territory and that Kyiv would fight on even if it is "stabbed in the back" by its allies.</p> <p>The remarks come days after a U.S. media report that Washington had encouraged Kyiv to signal willingness for talks, and seemed aimed at rebuffing such pressure, at a time when U.S. mid-term elections could test Western support for Ukraine.</p> <p>In an overnight address before he was due to address world leaders at a climate summit, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russia must be pushed into "genuine" negotiations.</p> <p>Zelenskiy said Ukraine had repeatedly proposed such talks, but "we always received insane Russian responses with new terrorist attacks, shelling or blackmail".</p> <p>"Once again - restoration of territorial integrity, respect for the U.N. Charter, compensation for all damages caused by the war, punishment of every war criminal and guarantees that this will not happen again. These are completely understandable conditions."</p> <p>Since Russia announced the annexation of Ukrainian territory at the end of September, Zelenskiy has decreed that Kyiv would never negotiate with Moscow as long as Vladimir Putin remains Russian president. Kyiv officials have repeated that position in recent days, while saying that Kyiv would be willing to negotiate with Putin's future successor.</p> <p>"Negotiating with Putin would mean giving up, and we would never give him this gift," Zelenskiy adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said in an interview with Italy's La Repubblica newspaper published on Tuesday.</p> <p>Dialogue would be possible only once Russian forces leave Ukrainian territory, Podolyak said.</p>

"We have no choice. Russia has invaded us with mobile crematoria and half a million body bags. If we stop defending ourselves, we will cease to exist. Literally. Physically. We will continue to fight even if we are stabbed in the back," he said.

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's Security Council, also tweeted that restoration of Ukraine's borders was a pre-condition for talks, and that Kyiv needed the "guarantee" of modern air defences, aircraft, tanks and long-range missiles.

On Monday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov repeated Moscow's position that it is open to talks but that Kyiv was refusing them. Moscow has repeatedly said it will not negotiate over territory it claims to have annexed from Ukraine.

OFFENSIVE

Ukrainian forces have been on the offensive in recent months, while Russia is regrouping to defend areas of Ukraine it still occupies, having called up hundreds of thousands of reservists over the past month.

Russia has been evacuating civilians from occupied areas, especially from southern Ukraine's Kherson region, in an operation that Kyiv says includes forced deportations, a war crime. Moscow says it is taking people to safety.

The next big battle is expected to be over a Russian-controlled pocket of land on the west bank of the Dnipro River, which includes Kherson city, the only regional capital Russia has captured since its invasion in February.

Britain's Ministry of Defence said on Tuesday Russia was preparing new fortified lines of defence inside territory it controls "to forestall any rapid Ukrainian advances in the event of breakthroughs".

This includes installing concrete barriers known as "dragon's teeth" to stop tanks. It said these were being put in place around Russian-occupied Mariupol in the south to help safeguard Russia's "land bridge" to occupied Crimea, a strategic objective, even if Moscow loses other territory.

On Monday, a source confirmed that White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan had held talks with Russian officials to avert escalation of the conflict, first reported by the Wall Street Journal. The Kremlin has declined to comment.

The White House did not deny the talks but says it will not make diplomatic moves about Ukraine without Kyiv's involvement.

"We reserve the right to speak directly at senior levels about issues of concern to the United States. That has happened over the course of the past few months. Our conversations have focused only on ... risk reduction and the U.S.-Russia relationship," White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said.

The United States is holding mid-term elections for Congress on Tuesday. Although most candidates from both parties support Ukraine, some right-wing Republican candidates have criticised the cost of U.S. military aid.

White House spokesperson Jean-Pierre said U.S. support for Ukraine would be "unflinching and unwavering" regardless of the outcome of Tuesday's vote.

Oleksandr Merezhko, the head of Ukraine's parliamentary foreign policy committee, said a Republican victory "will not in any way impact on support for Ukraine".

"We highly value the fact that we have bipartisan support," he said. "Whoever wins these elections, this will not have any negative influence. On the contrary, we expect that support for Ukraine will increase."

	<p>On Monday, Yevgeny Prigozhin, a Putin ally who heads the Wagner private military company fighting in Ukraine, acknowledged for the first time that Russia had intervened in U.S. elections in the past, and said it would do so again.</p> <p>"We have interfered, we are interfering and we will continue to interfere," he said on Facebook.</p> <p>U.S. prosecutors accuse Prigozhin of leading a Russian internet "troll farm" that helped back former president Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential election. Trump denies his campaign coordinated with the Russians.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Millions head to polls: midterm underway
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/live-updates/elections-2022-midterms-results-house-senate-polls-watch-live-stream-today-2022-11-08/
GIST	<p><i>Washington</i> — Millions of Americans are heading to the polls Tuesday as one of the most contentious and divisive campaign seasons in recent memory comes to a close, with control of Congress and critical offices around the country at stake in this year's midterm elections.</p> <p>All 435 seats in the House are up for grabs, as well as 35 Senate seats. Three dozen governorships hang in the balance, as well as hundreds of races to determine control of state legislatures.</p> <p>The first polls close at 6 p.m. ET in Indiana and Kentucky, and the final polls close at 1 a.m. ET in Alaska.</p> <p>CBS News will provide live coverage of the midterm results throughout the night and into the early morning on the CBS News Streaming Network, and on CBS stations from 8 to 11 p.m. Elections officials at the state level have cautioned that counting all the votes will take time, and that delays in determining the winners of races are part of the process to ensure an accurate count.</p> <p>Heading into Election Day, Republicans appeared in a solid position to take control of the House and challenge Democrats for control of the Senate. The latest CBS News Battleground Tracker showed the GOP on track to gain seats in the lower chamber, but a number of factors will influence the final outcome.</p> <p>Voters' top concerns centered around the economy and inflation, and Republicans are hoping that high consumer prices and discontent over economic headwinds will propel voters to rebuff President Biden and Democrats' agenda.</p> <p>Democrats, meanwhile, are hoping that strong turnout among their core constituencies, including young voters, will be enough to stem the tide of GOP gains and retain control of Congress.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 SPD history of killing people holding knives
SOURCE	https://www.kuow.org/stories/the-untold-story-of-herbert-hightower-and-seattle-police-s-complicated-history-with-killing-people-with-knives
GIST	<p>Castill Hightower woke to red and blue lights ricocheting off her bedroom walls. It was the middle of the night in north Seattle, and Hightower, then 17, saw police officers and flashing emergency vehicles outside her window.</p> <p>In the living room, her mother checked in on her kids and realized that Herbert Hightower Jr., Castill's older brother, was missing.</p> <p>Less than an hour before, Seattle Police had descended on her apartment building after someone called to report a death. It was a false call, although someone would die that night: Within minutes of arriving on</p>

scene, at 1:19 a.m., an 11-year veteran cop and field training officer would shoot the man who made the call, because he said he was holding kitchen knives.

Seattle Police would later release details from that September night in 2004, deeming it a case of “suicide by cop.” Their reports would say what police officials would say for years to come as officers shot and killed others holding sharp-edged objects: Hightower had a knife, and knives are deadly weapons; the officer had no choice but to shoot.

Herbert Hightower is one of at least 13 people since 2004 who have been killed by Seattle Police because they were holding a knife. High profile deaths of people holding knives include John T. Williams, a First Nations woodcarver, and Charleena Lyles, a mother of four, who, like Hightower, was Black.

These are not accidents: Officers nationwide have been trained for decades to apply deadly force to someone near them who is brandishing a knife, combined with behavior perceived as threatening.

Police training has evolved since Hightower’s death in 2004, and officers are encouraged to slow down and consider the space between themselves and a suspect. People with mental illness, who encounter police often, are now more likely to be flagged in the system.

And yet, Seattle Police continue to kill people with knives once a year on average since 2014 – often individuals showing signs of mental distress.

Brian Maxey, chief operating officer for Seattle Police, said the department has focused on de-escalation, and that these tragedies don’t reflect the bigger picture: just 0.03% of crisis contacts over 2019 and 2020 included the highest level of force.

“We tend to focus on the negatives because they are so visceral, and we have video of them,” Maxey said. “But we have thousands of cases where things went really, really well.”

The city appears to be at an impasse when it comes to these particular fatal shootings. Police leaders say the numbers are negligible, and they point to gaps in the state’s mental health system. Meanwhile, the surviving families ask why an officer would shoot someone in distress, holding a steak knife as Hightower reportedly did, and why their loved ones couldn’t get help.

Hightower’s death got little media attention in 2004. It would be six years before a Seattle cop shooting would undergo forensic public scrutiny.

In 2010, John T. Williams, was a partially deaf woodcarver of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, crossing Howell Street downtown with his carving knife. A patrol officer saw Williams and his knife, yelled at him to stop, and then shot and killed him. The officer resigned five and a half months later.

A year later in 2011, the Seattle Police Department came under federal scrutiny over allegations of excessive force. A subsequent Department of Justice investigation led to a consent decree, or federal oversight of the department.

Seattle is the only police department in the state that investigates its own cop shootings. That's because the department is exempt from a 2019 state law that says investigations must occur independent of the officer's agency. Seattle has this exemption because of the federal consent decree.

Cops are seldom killed by people with knives. In the years between 2017 and 2021, three officers were killed in the U.S. by knives or other edged weapons, according to data compiled by the FBI. None were in Seattle.

Maxey of Seattle Police said that hindsight suggests that some of these officers took calculated risks that didn’t pay off, and in many cases, officers were in close quarters with someone behaving erratically. But also, he said, their officers are trained to respond to lethal force with lethal force.

“There is no department in this country that will recommend you use a taser when you are being charged [by] someone with a knife,” Maxey said, adding that a taser is effective only 42 percent of the time, based on department analysis.

Since Hightower’s death, mental health issues have been a factor in many of Seattle’s cop-involved, fatal shootings of people holding knives, according to a KUOW review of news reports.

However, Maxey said officers are trained to react to people’s behaviors, not diagnose someone in the moment. Instead, officers are taught strategies to deescalate the situation.

“The label of mental health crisis isn’t particularly helpful, as it is designed to guide future interactions with that individual, not necessarily change the on-scene strategies,” Maxey said by email.

Despite the differences among these cases, a bladed object, no matter its size, is the common denominator — a reason for police to deploy their training to protect themselves. The Tueller Drill provided perspective on this.

What became widely known as the oversimplified “21-foot rule” stemmed from research in 1982, by then Sgt. Dennis Tueller. Tueller found that a suspect armed with an edged weapon was a threat within 21 feet, because they could reasonably reach an officer with a holstered gun before they grab their gun and fire two rounds.

Sean Hendrickson, an instructor at the Washington Criminal Justice Training Center, said the guideline has been misunderstood.

“It somehow got to the point where if someone has a knife at 21 feet, then they can stab you, so somehow the rule is you should shoot them, and that’s an oversimplification,” Hendrickson said.

While the insight behind the Tueller Drill is still sometimes taught at the academy where Seattle police get their training, Hendrickson said state training tells officers to slow down by managing distance and shielding.

Despite updated training, Seattle officers have strayed from de-escalation policy — as with the 2020 death of Terry Caver and 2021 death of Derek Hayden, both of whom had knives.

The Office of Police Accountability found the officers involved failed to de-escalate, but did not act outside the department’s policy on use of deadly force, which allows an officer to use deadly force when there’s imminent “threat of deadly or serious physical injury.” It also has to be objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional.

It’s a higher bar than the legal standard.

The Seattle officer who fatally shot Caver, who allegedly pulled a knife on a pedestrian, got a 20-day suspension. The officers who killed Hayden, who held a knife to his own throat on an empty Seattle street while shouting “Please kill me,” received less than four days suspension each.

In response, the police department updated its edged-weapon de-escalation training, and plans to introduce BolaWrap, a remote restraint device.

Herbert Hightower was the second of five kids, described as warm and loving with an easy smile and an affinity for practical jokes. He loved Marvel comic books – Spiderman was his favorite – and spent his childhood exploring the Arkansas woods.

When he was 17, his older brother Andre died of a gunshot wound after a basketball game against another teen grew heated. The Hightowers then moved to Seattle to be closer to family.

Hightower met a girl in Seattle, and they had a son, who Hightower adored. Around the age of 25, after a trip back to Arkansas and a breakup with his son's mom, his family noticed he was behaving strangely.

His mother Paula Woods said he seemed to be getting his "ducks in a row," and that there were red flags she "just totally missed."

Devastated by the breakup, it seemed Hightower came up with a plan, one that began with that fateful phone call outside a 7-Eleven in north Seattle on a cloudy night in September. "Somebody's just been killed," Hightower said calmly into the receiver.

He provided dispatchers the address where his ex-girlfriend lived with their 2-year-old son, near a Home Depot in an apartment above his mother's place.

A sergeant nearby came across a man he later believed was Hightower. He slowed his patrol car, rolled down his window, and asked the man twice if he had just called 911 from a payphone. When the man didn't respond or stop, the sergeant figured he wasn't involved, and continued toward the apartment complex.

A mile south of the apartment complex at the North Precinct, Officer Steve Hirjak and his trainee Tara Durant heard the call over the radio. They hopped in a police car, and Durant drove them to the scene.

"I thought there was a good chance that this was a prank call because no one was waiting at the pay phone for officers, but on the chance that there really was a crime scene, I wanted her close enough to respond for training purposes," Hirjak wrote in a statement two days later.

Seattle Police were at the scene when officers Hirjak and Durant arrived.

Hightower was walking on the shoulder of the road, Hirjak wrote, near a large cemetery where a security guard had spotted him earlier. The security guard told officers that Hightower seemed to be watching the scene, a behavior he later characterized to investigators as "being strange."

An officer had just radioed that someone was approaching on foot, when Durant pulled up about 20 feet from Hightower, she wrote in her report.

Durant and Hirjak stepped out of the police car, and Durant headed for Hightower, who was walking away from her. Durant called for him to come back, according to police and witness accounts. Hightower turned to look at Durant and Hirjak, and then kept walking.

"Hey, what are you doing? Come over here," Durant yelled, according to her written account.

This time, Hightower turned around and started walking back toward the officers. When Durant reached the front of the police vehicle, Hirjak yelled for her to back up, she wrote. Durant changed her instructions, yelling at Hightower to stay back, she wrote. But Hightower kept walking, heading for Hirjak.

"He's got two knives in his hands," Hirjak radioed.

Hirjak later wrote that he likely let Hightower get too close — that he was trained to believe that a bladed weapon could be lethal if within a 21-foot radius.

Hirjak yelled for Hightower to drop the knives. He didn't, Hirjak wrote.

Hightower increased his speed, Hirjak wrote, although neighbors said they didn't see him run. Fifteen seconds after Hirjak radioed dispatch about the knives, he shot his Glock, striking Hightower in the chest while he was roughly 15 feet from the officer.

Hightower fell to the ground, turned on his side and died. Police later found a handwritten note in his pocket, saying, “it’s time for me to end it,” and asking that his ex tell his son that he was a good father.

The apartment where a death had been reported was cleared.

The Hightower family said they do not believe the version of events police gave them. They said that in days that followed, details shared by police changed in ways that seemed to them to minimize blame that could be put on police. Body cameras were not affixed to Seattle police at this time.

Hirjak refused to be interviewed for this story. The Firearms Review Board cleared him of wrongdoing.

During a news conference, police command said Hirjak, 35, Korean American, was distraught over the shooting. He later married Tara Durant, his trainee, and they would start a nonprofit to train officers on use of force. Hirjak would speak at conferences, urging chiefs to change their culture.

Within the department, Hirjak advanced. For more than four years, he oversaw investigations into fatal use of force incidents — including that of Charleena Lyles and Che Taylor — as a lieutenant and captain of the department’s force investigation team. By 2018, he was commander for education and training, helping to develop new techniques, including in use of force.

The Hightower family, meanwhile, reeled. The impact of losing another child weighed heavily on Hightower’s parents, siblings, and also his son, who, at age 2, stopped talking.

“For days, I just wanted to stay in bed and cry,” Hightower’s mother Paula Woods said.

Castill Hightower began to advocate for her brother in 2020, encouraged by the national civil rights movement against police violence, and inspired by families marching and speaking out on behalf of loved ones.

Castill watched a video from the protests that resonated. “Why are you out here?” someone asked a mom in the clip. The woman held a sign with a photo of her son, who was killed more than 20 years before.

“‘If I’m not out here, nobody will be out here,’” Castill recalled the woman saying. “‘If I don’t fight for him, nobody will.’”

Castill Hightower said her family got no support from the local NAACP chapter after her brother died. Carl Mack, then chapter president, told media he felt it was a “classic example of suicide-by-cop” but never reached out to the family.

“I simply view it as a tragedy,” Mack told the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

In a phone call Saturday, Mack’s retelling of those events 18 years ago differed from police reports reviewed by KUOW. What he remembered police telling him was that Hightower had broken through police tape near the crime scene — which wasn’t true. Hightower had walked toward police, and broke through no police tape.

But Mack was close with then-police Chief Gil Kerliwoski, who he said had never given him a reason to doubt him. Mack said that if he’d heard the accurate account, he would have gotten involved. Kerlikowske could not be reached for comment.

And so, Mack said, “I moved on.”

The Hightower family is still hoping to see change.

“There are generational effects of police violence, that often go unseen,” Castill Hightower said. “There is a level of trauma that goes into having to convince people to care.”

	<p>Now an adult, Castill Hightower is fighting for her brother. She requested and then publicly demanded police records from the night of her brother's death. They were released. A mural of Herbert Hightower was unveiled in Burien earlier this year. She launched a GoFundMe campaign to hire an attorney and private investigator to have Hightower's case reopened.</p> <p>Most recently, Castill Hightower has pushed Seattle city leaders to earmark money for families of those killed and harmed by police violence. She coined it the "Impacted People's Budget."</p> <p>She said the City of Seattle has to be "the first stop for accountability."</p> <p>"My brother was here," Castill Hightower said. "He existed. He mattered."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Seattle activists: defund cops, sweeps
SOURCE	https://www.thestranger.com/news/2022/11/07/78710967/seattles-left-priorities-council-to-cut-funding-for-cops-and-sweeps
GIST	<p>Last week, leftist organizers held two demonstrations at City Hall to pressure city council members to adopt budget demands that would fund social services with money Mayor Bruce Harrell proposed to fill unfillable positions in the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and to expand the City's efforts to sweep unhoused people.</p> <p>Though the progressive-leaning council might be more receptive to these variously cute and crushing demonstrations, so far the council's attempts to curb the Mayor's reckless spending have elicited a resounding "meh" from organizers.</p> <p>Ghost Cops</p> <p>On Halloween, organizers from the Solidarity Budget, which is the name of the coalition of activists who led the demonstrations, "haunted" City Hall dressed as "Ghostbusters" in yellow hazard suits and as "ghost cops" in bed sheets, police hats, and the iconic Groucho disguise.</p> <p>The Ghostbusters and ghost cops danced to Ray Parker Jr.'s "Ghostbusters," and instead of asking "who you gonna call?" they demanded "no ghost cops, defund SPD." You'll have to listen to the video to figure out how they said that on beat.</p> <p>While the group continues to lobby the City to divert 50% of SPD's budget to other programs, this demonstration highlighted a clear starting place for lawmakers: cut \$17 million for "ghost cops," which are positions the City budgets for even though the department likely won't fill them. In his budget, the Mayor proposed funding for 120 new hires to fully fund the department's staffing plan, but that's a pipe dream in the face of a national cop shortage and the trend of SPD seeing more separations than hires in the last few years. The organizers worry the \$17 million will operate as a slush fund for SPD to use on new toys when the City could better spend the money on human service providers, to whom the Mayor would rather give a pay cut.</p> <p>No one on the council proposed an amendment to defund SPD's ambitious hiring plan, but Public Safety Chair Lisa Herbold said she will formally request quarterly budget and hiring reports from SPD. This way, she said, if the ghost cop positions go unfilled, the council can "work with the Executive on the best uses for those savings." The hiring incentives legislation that the council passed earlier this year also already requires this type of reporting, Herbold said in an email.</p> <p>Herbold's amendment did not necessarily get Solidarity Budget organizers to jump for joy.</p> <p>Angélica Cházaro, who spoke on behalf of the coalition, said the council has required quarterly reports from SPD for two years, and they've failed to reallocate salary savings from SPD to other departments.</p>

This year, the council used salary savings to fund [cop bonuses](#), and they “justified the incentives as being budget-neutral,” Cházaro said. For that reason, the Solidarity Budget would rather avoid salary savings in the first place.

The fight’s not over yet. Budget Chair Teresa Mosqueda will unveil the council’s first official edit of the Mayor’s proposal on Nov. 14. Based on analysis from central staff, Mosqueda may cut SPD funding by \$1.1 million to account for the anticipated salary savings or “ghost cops”. But, hey, she’s the budget chair and she could just be alpha and meet the Solidarity Budget’s demand.

Stop the Sweeps, or Else Sweep Them Out of Office

On Wednesday evening, the Solidarity Budget, joined by several organizations that advocate for unhoused people, held a rally outside of City Hall to demand “services, not sweeps.”

The organizers hung signs displaying some of the names of 191 unhoused people who have died during the Harrell administration. Mutual aid workers from Stop the Sweeps, wearing tags that read “SPD,” “Harrell Admin,” and “City Council” used brooms to brush red paint over the names to illustrate that sweeps kill.

The Mayor’s proposed budget would pour \$38 million into two programs that help the City sweep unhoused people: the Unified Care Team (UCT) and the Clean City Initiative. About \$15 million of that would count as a new expense, and \$5 million of that would expand the UCT, which could “[significantly increase](#)” the City’s already relentless rate of sweeps.

Over and over again, speakers noted the cruelty of sweeping someone, effectively separating them from their community and the resources they may have connected to nearby without offering appropriate shelter or housing.

Rather than hiring more outreach workers to direct homeless people to shelters [that don’t meet their needs](#), the lefties proposed using that money to build and acquire more affordable housing and non-congregate shelter.

In negotiations, several council members proposed funding for shelter and housing, but Mosqueda targeted Harrell’s UCT plan specifically. Her amendment would reroute money for five new, full-time UCT staff members (about \$1.2 million of the proposed \$5 million to expand the UCT) to the King County Regional Homelessness Authority’s (KCRHA) outreach team. She argued that the KCRHA is supposed to lead the region’s homelessness response. The authority also has a slower, more services-heavy approach to sweeps, which they call “encampment resolutions” or whatever.

According to an [open letter](#) signed by many groups that fall under the Solidarity Budget coalition, the organizers support expanding outreach and “building out the regional service model,” but only if the City also reduces and eventually ends removals so as to not tie outreach to “coercive measures like sweeps.”

Mosqueda’s amendment does not ensure sweeps will slow, but organizers at the rally on Thursday hoped their demonstration would pressure her to gut funding for removals in her balancing package, or else for other council members to take up their cause in negotiations.

If not, the open letter made it very clear that Seattle’s lefties won’t forget the council’s choices come election season. Tye Reed, co-chair of House Our Neighbors! echoed that sentiment at the rally.

Despite campaigning for some of the current council members in 2019, she’s “never been so disappointed in people [her] entire life.” She argued that the regular people helping unhoused neighbors actually do more to improve the City than any member on the council has done with their power to legislate. She called for Seattle’s left to continue working outside of the system but also to challenge incumbents in the 2023 election.

HEADLINE	11/07 CSIS concerns over Emergencies Act
SOURCE	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/csis-emergencies-act-1.6643337?cmp=rss
GIST	<p>Canada's intelligence agency felt that invoking the Emergencies Act would "galvanize" members of the self-styled Freedom Convoy and radicalize some toward engaging in violence, according to a document presented before the Emergencies Act inquiry Monday.</p> <p>The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) assessment report was made public as part of the Public Order Emergency Commission inquiry, which is reviewing the federal government's decision to invoke the never-before-used Emergencies Act to clear the crowds and vehicles that blocked parts of Ottawa's downtown for three weeks last winter to protest pandemic measures.</p> <p>The report states that CSIS sat in on three cabinet meetings before the federal government chose to invoke the Emergencies Act.</p> <p>On Feb. 13, the day before the legislation was invoked, the spy agency expressed concerns.</p> <p>"CSIS advised that the implementation of the [Emergencies Act] would likely galvanize the anti-government narratives within the convoy and further the radicalization of some towards violence," reads the document.</p> <p>The intelligence agency wrote that a spike in "violent rhetoric" followed the declaration of a provincial state of emergency to deal with the protests blocking streets in downtown Ottawa and at the Ambassador Bridge, a key trade route, in Windsor, Ont.</p> <p>"Furthermore, CSIS advised the invocation of the [Emergencies Act] by the federal government would likely lead to the dispersing of the convoy within Ottawa but would likely increase the number of Canadians who hold extreme anti-government views and push some towards the belief that violence is the only solution to what they perceive as a broken system and government," said the document.</p> <p>After the act was invoked, the spy agency said it continued to brief the federal cabinet about the risk of boosting violent ideologies and radicalization through the use of the Emergencies Act.</p> <p>CSIS wrote in its assessment report that as of Feb. 3, none of its assessments had showed that known ideologically motivated extremists were planning to engage in violence. The next sentences in the document are redacted.</p> <p>Ideologically motivated violent extremism, or IMVE, is a broad term used by CSIS to cover extremism based on various grievances, including those expressed by far-right, anti-government and racist groups.</p> <p>The day after the act was triggered, Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino defended his government's decision on national security grounds, saying that several of the individuals involved in the blockade at the border crossing in Coutts, Alta. had "strong ties to a far-right extreme organization with leaders who are in Ottawa."</p> <p>"We're talking about a group that is organized, agile, knowledgeable and driven by an extremist ideology where might makes right, and this is completely contrary to our democratic values," he said.</p> <p>Mendocino has continued to defend those comments.</p> <p>The unnamed author of the CSIS report went on to say that although its assessments reflected the views of the service at the time, cabinet discussions are confidential and its not known whether the assessments came up in cabinet discussions.</p> <p>CSIS Director David Vigneault is expected to testify before the commission in the coming weeks.</p>

	Commissioner Paul Rouleau, who is leading the Emergencies Act inquiry, is expected to deliver a final report in February.
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HEADLINE	11/07 No specific, credible election threats so far
SOURCE	https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2022/11/07/no-specific-credible-election-threats-white-house
GIST	<p>The federal government was not tracking any “specific, credible threats” of election violence one day before polls closed on Tuesday, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said.</p>
	<p>What You Need To Know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The federal government was not tracking any “specific, credible threats” of election violence one day before polls closed on Tuesday, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said • Jean-Pierre said law enforcement officials had briefed the president and the White House • In a speech last week, President Joe Biden issued a stark warning about possible political violence, referring to the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol and the assault on Paul Pelosi • The president appeared to echo warnings issued by top U.S. intelligence officials in a recent bulletin, which warns that extremists pose a "heightened threat" to the 2022 midterms
	<p>Speaking to reporters Monday, Jean-Pierre said law enforcement had briefed the president and the White House.</p> <p>“There are no specific, credible threats identified at this point,” she said. “The president has been briefed on the threat environment and directed that all appropriate steps be taken to ensure safe and secure voting.”</p> <p>In a speech last week, President Joe Biden issued a stark warning about possible political violence, referring to the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol and the assault on Paul Pelosi earlier this month.</p> <p>The president appeared to echo warnings issued by top U.S. intelligence officials in a recent bulletin, which warns that extremists pose a "heightened threat" to the 2022 midterms, particularly threats to election workers at polling places.</p> <p>Multiple news outlets reported on a joint memo circulated between the top federal law enforcement agencies warning that “election-related perceptions of fraud” will likely spur domestic violent extremists in the “broader efforts to justify violence in the lead up to and following the 2022 midterm election cycle.”</p> <p>"Election workers ... were harassed and threatened just because they had the courage to do their job and stand up for the truth, to stand up for our democracy," the president said of the 2020 election.</p> <p>"This intimidation, this violence against Democrats, Republicans and nonpartisan officials just doing their jobs, are the consequence of lies told for power and profit, lies of conspiracy and malice, lies repeated over and over to generate a cycle of anger, hate, vitriol and even violence."</p> <p>Much of the projected violence will likely come from lone actors, officials said in the memo, and those extremists are expected to target “states or counties where recounts, audits, or public election disputes occur,” the memo read in part.</p> <p>Biden is expected to speak Wednesday, the day after the election concludes, although the White House has been scant on details, especially regarding whether he will take questions from reporters that day.</p> <p>Jean-Pierre said Monday that “Americans should feel safe going to the polls.”</p>

	<p>“The administration has taken the issue of threats to the safety of voters and election officials seriously from day one,” she said. “The federal government has been working alongside state and local election officials and law enforcement to take the necessary steps to keep people safe.”</p> <p>“As the president has said ... you can't love your country only when you win,” she added. “It remains important to the president to state strongly and unequivocally that violence has no place in our democracy. He will continue to condemn violence.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Puget Sound hunger issues growing rapidly
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3700276/puget-sound-hunger-issues-continue-grow-calls-help-increasing/
GIST	<p>Inflation is bad. The cold weather is moving in. It's getting darker. Tough times, it seems, are everywhere you look. For the hungry, it's even more difficult.</p> <p>Food banks across the Puget Sound and the nation are having trouble keeping up with the demand.</p> <p>“Food banks are reporting deep declines in donated food,” Thomas Reynolds, CEO of Northwest Harvest, said.</p> <p>Northwest Harvest supports a statewide network of more than 300 food banks, meal programs, and schools in need.</p> <p>“It's really a very serious time because we have both increased number of households seeking food resources at food banks and pantries and much less food to provide,” Reynolds told KIRO Newsradio.</p> <p>Year-to-year, the major co-ops are seeing declines in just about everything.</p> <p>“Significantly increased food prices and higher cost of living are hitting while formalized emergency responses to the pandemic retire,” Ryan Scott, Chief Development Officer for Food Lifeline, said. “This has created a perfect storm where families are being stretched at both ends, being forced to make impossible choices between food and rent or food and school.”</p> <p>Food Lifeline said its strategic goal is to feed people who “are experiencing hunger today and solve the issue of hunger for tomorrow.”</p> <p>“Right now in Washington state, members of food-insecure households are increasing rapidly and we've seen that since February and March of this year,” Reynolds explained.</p> <p>Food Lifeline said it is dangerously low on our food supplies. During a typical year, it has 4-5 million pounds of deliverable food this time of year. It is currently hovering around 1 million.</p> <p>“With more than 1 million people facing food insecurity in western Washington right now, we are seeing our network stretched in the same way we did at the peak of the pandemic, with huge lines and not enough food to meet the need,” Scott said.</p> <p>Reynolds pointed out that government programs ended in January and February.</p> <p>“That also coincided with a spike in inflation. Also, the global food supply shortage IS affected mostly by conflict and climate change,” Reynolds said.</p> <p>The problem tends to get highlighted over the holidays, but the food-insecurity issue is growing rapidly and more urgent this year.</p>

	<p>“As families are coming together with each other, if they also think about neighbors next door and in the next community over and offer some resources to help other families celebrate the holidays, it’s a powerful way to build community,” Reynolds encouraged.</p> <p>Donations can be made to Food Lifeline or Northwest Harvest.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Russia’s casualties spark public outcry
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/11/07/casualties-russia-outcry-vuhledar-svatove/
GIST	<p>RIGA, Latvia — Steep Russian casualties in key battles in eastern Ukraine have prompted an unusual public outcry — and sharp criticism of military commanders — by surviving soldiers, and family members of recently conscripted fighters, who say their units were led to slaughter in poorly planned operations.</p> <p>The uproar over battlefield losses near Vuhledar in the Donetsk region prompted an official statement from the Russian Defense Ministry, which sought to play down the reportedly high death toll among soldiers in the 155th Separate Guards Marine Brigade, which led Moscow’s offensive in the area.</p> <p>It was the first time since the start of Russia’s invasion that the ministry has officially responded to reports of mass casualties and criticism of commanders on Telegram, the main platform used by officials as well as by reporters and bloggers covering the Russian war.</p> <p>Criticizing the war — or even calling it a war rather than a “special military operation” — is illegal in Russia. But the Kremlin in recent months has tolerated criticism of the military’s poor performance by pro-war hawks who back the invasion, including some demanding even more brutal tactics in Ukraine.</p> <p>On Sunday, pro-Kremlin military correspondents posted the text of a letter sent by the members of the 155th Brigade, which is normally based in Russia’s Far East, decrying the order that sent them into what they called “an incomprehensible offensive” in the village of Pavlivka, in Ukraine’s Donetsk region.</p> <p>“As a result of the ‘carefully’ planned offensive by the ‘great generals,’ we lost about 300 people killed, wounded and missing as well as half the equipment in four days,” the letter said. It was addressed to Gov. Oleg Kozhemyako of the Primorsky region, which lies on the coast of the Sea of Japan.</p> <p>Nearly 6,000 miles away, in eastern Ukraine, the weather had turned for the worse in Pavlivka, with rain muddying the roads and making reinforcement of troops in the area even more difficult, the commander of the pro-Russian Vostok battalion, Alexander Khodakovsky, wrote on Telegram over the weekend.</p> <p>“My fears about Pavlivka were justified,” Khodakovsky said, adding that he felt the advancement in the area initiated by Russian commanders had been “premature.”</p> <p>The letter also specifically criticized Rustam Muradov, the commander of Russia’s Eastern Military District, who was appointed in October. Earlier in the war, Muradov led the Vostok grouping of forces, which was responsible for operations in eastern areas of Donetsk and Luhansk.</p> <p>Officially, the military did not give the reason for the reassignment, but it came after the Russian military suffered a defeat in Lyman, a key logistics and supply hub in Donetsk area. The embarrassing defeat in occurred a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin declared Donetsk and three other Ukrainian regions to be annexed by Russia — a violation of international law.</p> <p>The Russian chain of command has appeared to be in constant disarray throughout the war as Moscow repeatedly switched overall commanders and replaced top generals in all four of its military districts.</p> <p>Most recently, Russian media reported that Col. Gen. Alexander Lapin no longer runs the Central Military District after he was repeatedly bashed by Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and Yevgeniy Prigozhin,</p>

Putin's ally and the financier of Wagner mercenary group, over strategic missteps and the poor performance of his troops.

The governor, Kozhemyako, at first dismissed the letter as a "potential fake planted" by Ukrainians but later issued a video message saying he had contacted the officers on the front line who confirmed there had been heavy fighting and losses, but, he said, "the number is as not as high as it's written in this letter."

"Due to the competent actions of the commanders, the losses among the marines over this period do not exceed 1 percent of the combat personnel and 7 percent of the wounded, a significant part of whom have already returned to duty," the Russian Defense Ministry said in its statement, issued on Monday.

The ministry added that the 155th Brigade had been fighting near the regional hub of Vuhledar for more than 10 days and advanced "five kilometers deep into Ukrainian positions."

Many pro-war commentators in Russia have been urging the ministry to be more transparent about its defeats. But rather than mollify these critics, the statement only inflamed their anger by minimizing the extent of the losses.

"So far it looks like that the military, having noticed another impending wave of discontent, decided to quickly subcontract the authorities of the region to their side and marginalize the whole situation, once again pretending that nothing is happening," wrote a popular blogger who writes under the moniker Military Informer. "We hope this situation will change."

Moscow's top brass are also now trying to fend off another public scandal after residents of Voronezh, a city in a strategic Russian region near the Ukrainian border, complained that recently conscripted men from the region had been sent unprepared to Svatove, a town in the Luhansk region that has been the site of fierce battles. Hundreds may have died, according to Russian outlet Verstka.

"For three days they were under shelling, they tried to survive the best they could ... they had no food and no sleep, they held up for three days and didn't flee, unlike their commanding officers," Inna Popova, the wife of a soldier, said in a video address recorded by the soldiers' family members, and posted by Verstka.

"Please help us rescue our mobilized [men] and remove them from the first line of defense," Popova said, adding that her husband had been mobilized on Oct. 12 and sent to Ukraine soon after.

Russian officials repeatedly asserted that the new conscripts, called up amid an unpopular mobilization effort initiated by Putin to replenish his army after several setbacks, would be tasked mainly with controlling already occupied areas and supporting the rear, and not to serve as the main advancing force.

Moscow took control of the Luhansk region early in the war, but its grip on the territory is under threat after Russian troops suffered a defeat near Kharkiv in September and lost Lyman, in the area Col. Gen. Lapin was responsible for, according to Russian media.

If Russia loses Svatove, Ukrainian forces probably will be able to advance further into Luhansk, regaining much of the territory that Putin claimed to be annexed and absorbed into Russia.

Verstka, citing family members, reported that men mobilized in Voronezh ended up on the front line after just a few days of training, probably a decision by their commanders aimed at closing the gaps in defensive lines and rotating out exhausted troops.

Two servicemen from the Voronezh region told Verstka that only a few dozen men from more than 500 soldiers in their unit have been accounted for since the intense shelling last week.

Pro-Kremlin Telegram channel "War on Fakes," which is often quoted by the Defense Ministry, dismissed the reports as false.

The Voronezh region governor, Alexander Gusev, said Sunday that he had met with the family members who recorded the video address. Gusev's press service did not refute reports of mass casualties, and a local news outlet deleted a report that had called the information fake.

"The situation is quite difficult in terms of finding objectivity, so we do not take responsibility for making such statements and discussing any figures and facts," the press service told local pool journalists, according to a screenshot posted by a journalist in the pool.

Russia has officially sent a reinforcement of 50,000 mobilized men to Ukraine in recent weeks with at least another 250,000 soldiers still in training, Putin said Monday during a government meeting.

Russia and Ukrainian forces are each preparing for a bitter winter that will complicate virtually every aspect of the war, from logistics to morale to the physical health of the troops.

For Ukraine, the approaching cold weather will be increasingly difficult to brace after weeks of Russia attacks on the country's energy infrastructure.

In Kyiv, the capital, Monday passed in relative quiet without air raid sirens or damage from Russian missiles — a welcome change for residents who have grown used to Monday morning strikes over the past month.

But the attacks have forced authorities to plan blackouts around the capital and in other parts of the country to relieve the strain on the energy grid, and millions in the capital and its vicinity were without power overnight.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Had Covid? Watch out for stroke symptoms
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/if-youve-had-covid-watch-out-for-stroke-symptoms/2022/11/03/9fa3317a-5b80-11ed-bc40-b5a130f95ee7_story.html
GIST	<p>Harlan Krumholz, a cardiologist at the Yale School of Medicine, says he worries about two kinds of long Covid. There's the obvious version where people suffer prolonged virus symptoms like fatigue, and a stealthier version in which people recover yet carry an added risk of blood clots and strokes.</p> <p>He doesn't want to panic people — most of us will probably be fine. But new studies confirm that some will develop an elevated risk of blood clots, strokes or heart attacks. Given that most people have had Covid by now, everyone should be more vigilant about the early warning signs such as chest pain, unusual swelling, numbness or weakness, or sudden changes in balance, speech or vision.</p> <p>Scary reports started to surface in the spring of 2020 of young people suffering deadly strokes during or right after a Covid infection. Doctors were starting to suspect Covid was not just a respiratory disease but a blood vessel disease. Larger studies now back up their suspicions and showed that Covid infections elevated everyone's risk. That explained why younger people who should have had almost no risk were showing up with strokes, but they were just the tip of the iceberg. Patients who already smoked or had high blood pressure or diabetes went from high risk to even higher.</p> <p>One recent study, published in the journal Heart — associated with the British Medical Journal — tracked 54,000 people in the UK for four and a half months, and concluded that those who'd been infected were 2.7 times more likely to develop venous thromboembolism — a dangerous type of blood clot — than those who had never been infected.</p> <p>The study also showed that those who got infected but were not sick enough to be hospitalized were still 10 times more likely to die of any cause during the study period than their uninfected counterparts. People who'd been hospitalized for Covid-19 were about 100 times more likely to die during the study period.</p>

Another new study published in Neurosurgery focused on the period when people were actively infected, and concluded that Covid-19 infection was associated with strokes, and that strokes that occurred in infected people were likely to be more severe and harder to treat with surgery.

Krumholz, who I met before the pandemic through his work on improving the way doctors conduct and evaluate studies, said they still don't have enough data to know how much these risks are mitigated by vaccination, or how long the elevated risk lasts. He said the medical community has long known that viruses can leave lingering effects, but until this pandemic, it had never been studied so thoroughly.

A consensus is forming that the lasting damage is caused by inflammation — a necessary part of our immune defense system, but one that can cause harm if it remains in high gear.

Not everyone who gets Covid will suffer serious blood vessel inflammation, but the disease is still something of a roll of the dice — or, as physician Ziyad Al-Aly puts it, Russian Roulette. That doesn't mean people should despair or panic. Early treatment can save lives, which is why doctors urge people who've been infected not to ignore any warning sign, even if they weren't previously at any known risk.

Al-Aly, who works at the Veterans Affairs St. Louis Health Care System, was one of the first doctors to jump into studying long Covid and, more generally, the aftermath of infection. "Something about SARS-CoV-2 increases propensity to damaging the lining of the blood vessels and increases the probability of blood clotting," he said.

"What makes this such a dangerous disease is mainly that it attacks these vessels," said Pascal Jabbour, a neurosurgeon at Thomas Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia. The disease can lead to inflammation in blood vessels all over the body, he said, including the gut, causing a condition called bowel ischemia. It's also at the root of a circulatory problem known as Covid toes.

Jabbour is lead author of the Neurosurgery paper. I'd interviewed in the spring of 2020, after he'd led one of a handful of very small studies showing preliminary but worrisome connections between strokes and Covid.

His newer research looks at 575 stroke patients — some with Covid and some without. They found those with Covid fared worse and were harder to treat with surgery aimed at opening blocked vessels. The infected group included younger, healthier people than the group of uninfected stroke patients, which is what you'd expect to see if infections were raising risk across the board.

Some in the infected group had mild infections, and a few didn't know they had Covid until they showed up at the hospital with a stroke, Jabbour said. This further complicates the already complex task of tallying Covid deaths. Should people who appear to have had died of a stroke and tested positive be counted as dying with Covid, or from Covid?

Even something as neutral as heart disease risk is politicized when it intersects with the pandemic. "You can't imagine the attacks I got," said Jabbour, after he appeared on CNN in 2020 discussing his early observations and study results. That polarization has only deepened — with some people refusing to believe that Covid can have lasting effects, and others posting scare stories that the continued harsh lockdowns in China are part of a plan to triumph over the West as widespread long Covid collapses our work force.

The reality is some people have been devastated by Covid, even as most fully recover. It takes time, good studies and a lot of cases to get an understanding of the after-effects of infection, and that information is coming from countries that have seen the most cases. The take-home message is that even if you feel fine, past Covid infection is a cardiovascular risk factor, a little like elevated cholesterol. It's not a reason to despair, but it's a very good reason to be vigilant.

HEADLINE	11/07 Warm weather shatters records East coast
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/11/07/record-warmth-east-coast/
GIST	<p>The eastern United States is in the final throes of an extended and exceptional bout of warmth that has resulted in dozens of records from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border since late last week.</p> <p>In a number of spots, including Atlanta, Tallahassee and Burlington, Vt., the temperatures have risen as high as they ever have this late in the year.</p> <p>The high temperatures since Saturday, some 15 to 25 degrees above normal, mark the culmination of a remarkably warm start to November overall.</p> <p>On Monday, a tool from the Southeast Regional Climate Center revealed Washington's weather more closely resembled what is normally seen in Tampa at this time of year, while Raleigh, N.C., mimicked Miami.</p> <p>As a cold front pushes through the East by Monday night, weather more typical of November will return.</p> <p>The warmth by the numbers</p> <p>Record temperatures that focused on parts of the Plains, Midwest, Ohio Valley and Gulf Coast last week advanced eastward and increased in coverage over the weekend and into Monday.</p> <p>A sampling of the slew of Sunday records includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burlington: A high of 76 degrees was a record for the date and month and the highest ever observed so late in the year. • Boston: A high of 76 topped the Nov. 6 record of 73 in 1948. That tied for the fifth-highest reading so late in the year. • Richmond: The 82-degree high was one degree above the Nov. 6 record set in 1975. It also tied for the third-highest temperature so late in the year. • Raleigh: The 83-degree high tied the Nov. 6 record from 2003 and was tied for the second-highest reading so late in the year. • Atlanta: The 83-degree high crushed the Nov. 6 record of 78, tying for the highest temperature this late in the year. • Tallahassee: A scorcher of 88 equaled the Nov. 6 record from 2015, as hot as it's been this late in the year. In Fort Myers, Fla., it hit 90-plus for the fourth time this month. • Harlingen, Tex.: The high of 93 broke the Nov. 6 record of 92 from 1945. It tied for the highest this late in the year. <p>Sunday records came after a significant number of locations set record highs on Saturday, including Washington Dulles International Airport; Hartford, Conn.; Buffalo; Cleveland; Concord, N.H.; and Muskegon, Mich.</p> <p>While Sunday's afternoon highs were exceptionally high, the low temperatures — early in the day — were even more anomalous in many instances.</p> <p>A majority of weather stations in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast notched record-high low temperatures Sunday. Burlington and Bangor, Maine, dipped to only 62 degrees, warmer than their average highs. Boston, New York and Albany, N.Y., dropped to just 65, 66 and 67, respectively. Many of these lows were also the highest so late in the year.</p> <p>In the D.C.-Baltimore area, record-high lows in the mid-60s were set at all three official observing locations Sunday. Washington (Reagan National) and Dulles both dipped to only 66, their highest low on record so late in the year. Baltimore's low of 64 was also its warmest so late.</p> <p>Monday's records</p> <p>Monday's record list again featured locations from Maine to the Deep South, with a focus on the East Coast.</p>

At least four dozen locations set Nov. 7 record highs, including [Washington](#) and [Islip, N.Y.](#), reaching 81 and 80, respectively. Washington's temperature was an astonishing 75 degrees at 9 a.m., the warmest ever observed so early in the day this late in the year (since at least 1936).

The records Monday also included a number of November monthly records that are also warmer than anything witnessed in December. Islip was one of those places. The 80-degree high there outdid any temperature in the final two months of the year by two degrees. Other locations that set their warmest temperatures for November and beyond include those in a zone from [New Orleans](#) with a high of 90, to [Wallops Island](#), Va., at 81 and [New York JFK Airport](#) with 80.

Many other locations, like Washington and [Baltimore](#) with 81, saw either their warmest temperature so late in the year, or in the top few.

Monday's warmth closed out a first week of unusual November weather. Washington hit 70 or above every day for the first time on record, and it was the [second-warmest first November week on record](#) in Richmond.

Much of the northeast quadrant of the Lower 48 has seen temperatures well above normal for the first week of November. [Departures from normal temperature](#) as of Sunday included some eye-popping values, such as 16 degrees above normal in Albany and 13 degrees in Baltimore, both embedded within a large area of at least 10 above normal.

Why so warm?

A late-summer-like zone of high pressure, sometimes called a heat dome, swelled over the eastern United States during the first week of the month before intensifying over the weekend.

Over the past several days, the heat dome has been flanked by a big dip in the jet stream to the west and a developing subtropical storm north of the Caribbean. These features have helped amplify the pattern, increasing the heat dome's intensity.

Given a setup more common of late summer, temperatures have remained persistently high overnight, in part thanks to extraordinary levels of moisture for November. Precipitable water values, a measure of moisture in the air, were as high as 350 percent above normal in the D.C. area Sunday morning.

Out of season high humidity and record warmth are made more probable by human-caused climate change. This bout of extreme temperatures in the east has mimicked other waves of intense warmth around the globe in recent months, including a surge of record warmth last week in Europe.

While a smaller surge of high temperatures late this week break more records, a colder air mass will take aim at the region by the weekend.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Europeans burning trees to keep warm
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/eu-forests-energy-crisis/
GIST	<p>IN THE PAST few decades, the European Union has transformed its energy system. In 2005 about 10 percent of all energy consumed in the EU came from renewable sources. Last year that share hit 22 percent—it's one of the main reasons the bloc's per capita carbon emissions have rapidly declined in the 21st century. This shift will need to ramp up even further if the EU is to hit its target of net-zero emissions by 2050.</p> <p>But here's the weird thing. A huge chunk of that renewable energy comes from burning wood. Nearly 60 percent of all the EU's renewable energy comes from bioenergy—a catch-all term that encompasses any energy sourced from something recently living. That includes agricultural waste, crops grown for biofuel, and—most importantly—wood from forestry industries. A small proportion of this biomass is turned into</p>

biofuels or burned in power plants, but almost three-quarters is burned to warm homes and businesses. And we're not just talking about wood-burning stoves. Almost all of Sweden's urban heating is generated by district heating systems, which mostly burn wood produced by the country's vast and influential forestry industries.

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine sending energy prices soaring this winter, many Europeans are looking to wood to provide cheap, reliable energy. In Germany, firewood suppliers are facing unprecedented demand, and landowners are reporting that their forests are being plundered by thieves. NGOs have warned that the increased demand for firewood will lead to a rise in illegal logging and put protected forests at risk. "People are going to burn millions of tons of wood this winter, and there's nothing we can do about it," says Martin Pigeon, a campaigner at Fern, a forest-protecting NGO.

A big part of the problem is the Renewable Energy Directive (RED)—a piece of European legislation that classifies some wood products as a renewable fuel and funnels subsidies toward burning them. But revisions to the RED are currently being negotiated. Changes to the legislation could bring these incentives to an end.

Launched in 2009, the RED was set up by the EU to direct funding toward renewable energy projects instead of those based on fossil fuels. "The justification for these subsidies and market incentives was to give renewables a market place in a context where fossils were cheaper," says Pigeon. Since then, the prices of various renewables have tumbled way below those of fossil fuels, but the RED continues to direct billions of euros of funding toward wood burning, which releases more CO₂ per unit of energy than some fossil fuels, as well as causing harmful particulate pollution. "Now we're looking at a situation where it is profitable to burn wood regardless of legislation, and that is very scary," says Pigeon.

This might be about to change. The RED is currently being revised in a series of long negotiations between the three different parts of the EU: the Parliament, Commission, and Council. In September, the European Parliament voted to end subsidies for unprocessed wood directly sourced from forests, although a long list of exceptions includes trees cut down due to disease, natural disaster, or fire prevention. Now this legislation must be reviewed by EU member states, which will decide whether they agree with these exclusions and whether they want to phase down the amount of forest wood that can count toward their renewable energy targets. The latter point will prove controversial. In countries like Latvia, Finland, and Sweden, wood-based fuel makes up more than a fifth of renewable energy consumption. Phasing down the renewable status of wood would make it much harder for these countries to achieve their climate goals.

"When we are subsidizing burning of any part of this ecosystem, we are fueling a lose-lose scenario for the climate," says Lina Burnelius, project leader at Protect the Forest, a Swedish NGO. As well as emitting large amounts of CO₂, wood burning incentivizes the logging of forests, which are vital in climate mitigation. It takes trees decades to sequester carbon as they grow, so burning wood today incurs a carbon debt that can only be repaid years into the future. The best way to avoid this debt is simply to leave trees in the ground. Earlier this year an investigation by The New York Times found that trees in a protected forest in Romania were being felled and turned into wood pellets to be burned in stoves and district heating systems across Europe.

Instead of incentivizing the further destruction of forests, we should be channeling more money into insulating homes and installing heat pumps, says Pigeon. Both of these would reduce the demand for energy. And Burnelius points out that we need to make other forms of renewable energy even more desirable than burning wood. For her, that means shifting subsidies for fossil fuels and biomass industries to more strongly support solar, offshore wind, and geothermal energy. "We need to start putting money where it will help everyone in society, not the polluting industries. We cannot go from one climate-harmful fuel to another."

The money that's currently channeled into burning could be redirected to help EU citizens pay their fuel bills, says Pigeon. In Central and Eastern Europe, it's often poorer people who rely on wood stoves to heat their homes—people who will be forced to choose between burning wood or going cold. The solution,

	Pigeon says, isn't to ban burning wood, but to change the system so that the most environmentally friendly forms of energy are cheapest.
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HEADLINE	11/07 Putin ally admits interfering in US elections
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/putin-ally-yevgeny-prigozhin-admits-interfering-in-us-elections
GIST	<p>The powerful Russian businessman and a close Vladimir Putin ally Yevgeny Prigozhin has admitted to interfering in US elections on the eve of a midterm vote in which Republicans will seek to take control of Congress and state-wide offices across the country.</p> <p>“Gentlemen, we interfered, we are interfering and we will interfere,” Prigozhin, who has previously been accused of influencing the outcome of elections across continents, said in a statement posted by his catering company, Concord.</p> <p>“Carefully, precisely, surgically and the way we do it, the way we can,” Prigozhin, 61, added.</p> <p>Prigozhin was responding to a request to comment on a recent Bloomberg report saying Russia was interfering in Tuesday’s US midterm elections. The vote is crucial for the legislative agenda in the rest of US president Joe Biden’s term – and could pave the way for a White House comeback by Donald Trump.</p> <p>The US social media analysis firm Graphika last week said that suspected Russian operatives have used far-right media platforms to criticise Democratic candidates in the lead-up to the midterm elections in a number of US states, including Georgia, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Prigozhin, with a dozen other Russian nationals and three Russian companies, was indicted in 2018 as part of special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential elections.</p> <p>Prigozhin was charged with inciting discord and dividing American public opinion before the 2016 US presidential election, accusations Prigozhin, as well as the Kremlin, has previously denied.</p> <p>Biden’s spokesperson, Karine Jean-Pierre, said the White House was not surprised by Prigozhin’s remarks. “It’s well known and well documented in the public domain that entities associated with Yevgeny Prigozhin have sought to influence elections around the world including the United States,” she said.</p> <p>The once-secretive businessman has emerged as one of Russia’s most visible pro-war figures since the start of Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, leading to speculation he is seeking a role in the government.</p> <p>In September, Prigozhin, also known as “Putin’s chef” because his catering business hosted dinners attended by the Russian president, admitted to founding the notorious Wagner Group private military company in 2014. The US and EU have previously imposed sanctions on Prigozhin for his role in Wagner.</p> <p>The series of brazen admissions by the businessman is remarkable given the geopolitical implications of the acknowledgments and the fact that Prigozhin has previously pursued several Russian and western outlets for reporting his links to Wagner.</p> <p>Prigozhin has frequently boasted about Wagner’s role in the war in Ukraine, where the group is believed to have played a central part in the capture of several cities and towns in the east of the country.</p>

	<p>He has also criticised the country’s senior military leadership and has vouched to create his own “militia training centres” in Russia’s Belgorod and Kursk regions bordering Ukraine.</p> <p>Last week, Wagner opened a “military technology” centre in St Petersburg, which was widely seen as another effort by Prigozhin to promote his military credentials and take a more public role in shaping Russia’s military strategy.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Canada: China interfered in elections
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/china-weaken-canada-democracy-justin-trudeau
GIST	<p>Justin Trudeau has warned that China is “play[ing] aggressive games” to undermine democratic institutions amid reports Beijing actively interfered in Canada’s federal elections.</p> <p>His comments on Monday came after a news report that Beijing had funded a “clandestine network” of candidates in Canada’s 2019 election and just days after the federal police force said it was actively investigating a secret network of illegal Chinese “police stations” in Toronto.</p> <p>The allegations – which came on the same day that a close ally of Vladimir Putin said that Russia had previously interfered in US elections – are likely to intensify concerns about the scope of foreign intrusion in Canadian domestic politics.</p> <p>“We have taken significant measures to strengthen the integrity of our elections processes and our systems, and we’ll continue to invest in the fight against election interference, against foreign interference of our democracy and institutions,” Trudeau told reporters on Monday afternoon. “Unfortunately, we’re seeing countries, state actors from around the world, whether it’s China or others, are continuing to play aggressive games with our institutions, with our democracies.”</p> <p>The prime minister’s remarks followed reporting from Global News that Canadian intelligence had concluded Beijing worked to undermine the democratic process in Canada in multiple elections, including votes held in 2019 and 2021.</p> <p>The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) briefed the prime minister, as well as senior cabinet ministers, in January about China’s attempts, the report said.</p> <p>The efforts are believed to include placing agents in the offices of lawmakers to influence policy in China’s favor, as well as attempts to “co-opt and corrupt” former Canadian officials in order to gain political power and influence in the nation’s capital.</p> <p>It is unclear if CSIS, or the federal government, believe the efforts were successful.</p> <p>David Mulroney, Canada’s former ambassador to China, said the allegations were “far more aggressive” than previously suspected.</p> <p>“Just when you think some allegations against China are exaggerated, you find that they’ve in fact been understated,” he said. “These represent a malicious, dangerous threat to our democracy.”</p> <p>Election interference attempts have targeted members from both the Liberal and Conservative parties.</p> <p>“We had evidence of interference in the last general election through proxies that were spreading disinformation on Chinese language social media platforms, which interfered in a number of [electoral districts] with significant Chinese communities,” the Conservative MP Michael Chong told the Guardian.</p> <p>He said a number of incidents of harassment against prominent Uyghur and Tibetan students at Ontario universities had been “coordinated” through Toronto’s Chinese consulate.</p>

Staff in the red-brick building in a leafy, affluent enclave of the city are also alleged to have led the efforts to undermine Canada's federal elections.

According to Global News, CSIS believes the consulate was behind a large financial transaction to at least 11 federal election candidates and Chinese government-affiliated operatives who worked as campaign staffers – C\$250,000 (US\$185,000) was allegedly transferred through a provincial Ontario lawmaker and the staffer to a federal election candidate.

The election interference efforts have been tied to the Communist party's United Front work department, an organization in Beijing that monitors and attempts to influence Chinese nationals abroad. The United Front operations are also linked to a [clandestine network of illegal police stations](#) operating in Canada and across the globe.

Asked for comment on the allegations, the prime minister's office said: "Protecting Canadians' security is our top priority. Threats, harassment, or intimidation of Canadian citizens are unacceptable, and all allegations of interference are investigated thoroughly by our security agencies.

"As threats evolve, so must the methods used to address them. That is why the prime minister has given the minister of public safety the mandate to improve collaboration between Canadian security agencies."

Mulroney pointed to failed attempts to implement a foreign agents registry that would deter Beijing from seeking to influence former Canadian officials.

"It would crimp China's ability to enlist people, not just in the diaspora, but in business and in politics, who can be bought for a few thousand dollars," he said. "I think we're desperately in need of this, but the government has just not moved on it."

The revelations about Beijing's interference attempts, as well as the ongoing investigation into illegal Chinese police stations, come as Ottawa prepares to unveil its "China strategy" – a long-delayed series of policies aimed at formalizing its plan to counteract an increasingly aggressive Beijing.

Canada has a complex relationship with the economic superpower: even as diplomatic relations sour, exports have increased.

Canada recently ordered three Chinese companies to [divest from Canadian mining firms](#) over national security concerns. Last month, a delegation of Canadian lawmakers visited Taiwan, prompting outrage from Beijing that Ottawa was "grossly interfer[ing] in China's internal affairs".

In December, Canada will co-host Cop15, the global biodiversity conference, with China.

"Beijing always goes for the weakest link in the chain," said Mulroney, adding that Canada is increasingly viewed by China target the United States. "We cannot afford to be in that position. We just can't."

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HEADLINE	11/08 Don't expect cheap airfares back soon
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/dont-expect-cheap-airfares-to-come-back-soon-airline-executives-say-11667903403?mod=hp_lead_pos5
GIST	<p>Airfares are sky high, and airline executives expect them to stay that way.</p> <p>Airlines are battling surging costs for fuel and labor. Meanwhile, worker shortages and delayed plane deliveries are preventing them from adding more flights when more people want to fly.</p> <p>The consumer-price index for airfare was up 43% in September from a year earlier, according to the U.S. Labor Department. Ticket prices were still depressed last year, but airfares in the CPI were up 8% from September 2019, according to Airlines for America, a trade group.</p>

Airlines stabilized their operations after [a rocky start to summer](#) that was marred by [cancellations, delays and lost baggage](#). But they did it by [cutting back on the number of flights](#) they offered, and executives say the industry's growth will be hemmed in for the foreseeable future.

Andrew Watterson, [Southwest Airlines](#) Co.'s chief operating officer, said, "It's unusual. You have demand quickly outstripping supply like this."

"I think we have a couple of years where demand and supply may not be as aligned as it was prepandemic," he said.

For airlines, that is proving to be a [blessing in part](#), leading to higher fares that have helped cover a roughly 80% increase in jet fuel prices and revenues over the summer that beat those in 2019.

Prices have moderated somewhat in recent months, but industry experts and airline executives say they aren't anticipating low fares anytime soon. Flights departing in March 2023 are averaging \$350 a domestic round-trip ticket—26% higher than at this time last year and 28% above 2019, though that could change if bookings don't come through, according to Hopper, a booking app.

In Europe, prices are also climbing, with discount carrier [Ryanair Holdings](#) PLC, Europe's biggest airline by passenger numbers, reporting a 14% rise in ticket prices across its short-haul network over the summer compared with 2019.

"There has been a structural change in capacity in Europe over the last two years," Ryanair Chief Financial Officer Neil Sorahan said in an interview. "The days of the kind of 9.99 euro (\$9.98) fares are probably gone."

Higher fares haven't yet deterred customers, but rising prices for food, energy and other goods could chip away at the savings people are using for travel, leaving them strapped for cash, said Kevin Healy, president and chief executive of Campbell-Hill Aviation Group, a consulting firm.

"The only thing pushing in the other direction is inflation. That hasn't seemed to have as big an impact yet," he said.

There could be some relief as airlines restore capacity, albeit more slowly than they had originally planned. [Delta Air Lines](#) Inc. plans to rebuild its full network by next summer, and CEO Ed Bastian has said the additional supply could help ease some pricing pressure.

As the travel chaos earlier this year stabilizes, the longer-term structural shortages in the system are being exposed, which executives say will take years to address.

[United Airlines Holdings](#) Inc. CEO Scott Kirby said, "Pilot shortages, aircraft delivery shortages from both [Boeing](#) and [Airbus](#), Air Traffic Control saturation and airport infrastructure constraints around the world are all real, and they are constraints that will take years to fully resolve."

[Spirit Airlines](#) Inc. is flying its planes two hours less a day than it would like, due in part to staffing challenges. Southwest Airlines said it could be flying 5% to 8% more if it had all the pilots it needs, but said training logjams have been a holdup.

Airports from Toronto Pearson to Amsterdam Schiphol, [London Heathrow](#) and Sydney Airport have faced labor shortages and operational challenges as they tried to respool operations. Heathrow, Schiphol and Frankfurt airports have been among the hubs that enforced caps, limiting the number of seats available to passengers.

“There are many still-unfilled vacancies at airports, ground service providers and security check organizations around the world, continuing to limit any significant capacity expansion,” [Deutsche Lufthansa](#) AG Chief Executive Carsten Spohr said.

[Delays in plane deliveries](#) from Boeing Co. and Airbus SE and a shortage of spare parts and maintenance slots have also affected airlines’ operations, the companies said.

The global airline landscape is different since the start of the pandemic, with scores of [airlines going bust](#) or largely scaling back their operations as Covid-19 travel restrictions took their toll.

That trend not only removed capacity from the market, but in some cases removed discount operators that were pushing down airfares. [Air France-KLM Group](#), for example, said the collapse of Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA’s low-cost long-haul operation from Paris has taken away competition that had been pulling down fares.

“That has helped us, and we don’t foresee them coming back in the near future,” Air France-KLM CEO Ben Smith said of Norwegian Air’s collapse.

The Scandinavian carrier, which since the pandemic has abandoned its ambitious plan to introduce long-haul, low-cost flying, had also operated from cities such as London, Rome and Amsterdam before its collapse and made headlines for offering one-way fares between Europe and the U.S. for as low as \$69.

Critical capacity has also been removed by the airlines themselves. At the onset of the coronavirus, carriers moved to park and in some cases retire some of their oldest and most fuel-guzzling aircraft. British Airways and Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd., for instance, permanently retired 747 superjumbos. That capacity hasn’t returned, leading to fewer jumbo jets operating on key markets.

The deluge of passengers, the operational constraints on airlines, and rising inflation and costs, are leading to a much higher level of capacity discipline across the market, Deutsche Lufthansa’s Mr. Spohr said. Airlines are reluctant to fly more when the costs of operating each flight are rising and potentially undermining profitability.

“The high cost of fees, materials and fuel has raised the hurdle for additional capacity deployment to be profitable,” Mr. Spohr said. “That’s preventing expansion as well.”

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HEADLINE	11/07 Russia presses evacuation of Kherson
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-presses-evacuation-of-kherson-as-ukrainian-offensive-looms-11667822784?mod=hp_lead_pos6
GIST	<p>Russia stepped up the evacuation of civilian institutions from the occupied Ukrainian city of Kherson, where looting has become widespread and squatters have taken over the abandoned government headquarters, as Ukraine received sophisticated Western air-defense systems that could help it protect its cities.</p> <p>Moscow’s decision to mobilize roughly 300,000 reservists has allowed Russian forces, for now, to stabilize the front line in most areas, halting the Ukrainian offensives that reclaimed large parts of the Kharkiv, Donetsk and Kherson regions in September and October.</p> <p>Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that 50,000 Russian soldiers called up as part of his mobilization drive were now serving with combat units in Ukraine, the Interfax news agency reported. Mr. Putin said about 80,000 were “in the zone of the special military operation” and the rest of the almost 320,000 draftees were at training camps in Russia. Russia’s defense minister said at the end of October that Russia had sent 82,000 newly conscripted men to Ukraine in just over a month and that half of those sent to Ukraine were already assigned to combat units.</p>

[Russian attempts at regaining the initiative](#), however, are proving unsuccessful. Reports of massive casualties sustained by Russian Pacific Fleet marines in the village of Pavlivka in Donetsk have caused a firestorm on Russian social media and prompted the governor of the region where the marines are normally based to ask for an investigation.

Unable to advance on the battlefield, Russia has subjected Ukrainian cities to devastating cruise missile and drone attacks in recent weeks, targeting the country's energy network. Some 40% of [Ukraine's electricity infrastructure](#) has been damaged in these attacks, the government said. Cities around the country, including Kyiv, are suffering from rolling blackouts.

While Ukraine says it has been able to shoot down more than half of the incoming missiles, it needs sophisticated air defenses to complement its existing Soviet-vintage batteries. On Monday, Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said Ukraine has received the [U.S.-Norwegian National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System](#), or Nasams, and the Spanish-supplied Aspide air-defense systems. "These weapons will significantly strengthen #UAarmy and will make our skies safer," he tweeted.

Earlier this month, the U.S. promised to provide Ukraine with two Nasams batteries in the immediate future, with six more next year. Nasams is a medium-range air-defense system, with each battery able to protect an entire city. Spain said last month it would supply one battery of medium-range Aspide air-defense missiles, an older system manufactured in Italy.

The only medium-range Western air-defense system deployed in Ukraine until now was a battery of German Iris-T missiles, supplied last month. Three more Iris-T batteries have been promised by Berlin. Ukraine moved to nationalize several key enterprises, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Monday. These include aircraft-engine maker Motor Sich, power-transformer manufacturer Zaporozhtransformator, AvtoKrAZ, which makes military and other trucks, oil and natural gas extraction company Ukrnafta, and oil refiner Ukrtatnafta. The businesses are associated with some of Ukraine's oligarchs.

"These steps, which are necessary for our country in the conditions of war, are carried out in accordance with current laws and will help ensure the urgent needs of our defense sector," Mr. Zelensky said on his Telegram channel.

The city of Kherson, the only Ukrainian regional capital that Moscow seized since the February invasion and the only Russian foothold on the right bank of the Dnipro River that bisects the country, remains the focus of attention. Tens of thousands of Russian troops, including its elite units, are deployed in Kherson, readying for an expected Ukrainian offensive.

Russia—which declared Kherson and three other [partially occupied Ukrainian regions](#) to be part of its territory in September—has been steadily removing its civilian staff and officials of the collaboration administration, including the police, from the city in recent weeks. It has already sent away the collections of the local museums and disinterred and hauled away the body of Count Grigory Potemkin, the 18th-century Russian commander who founded the city.

"They are taking out everything they can, and ruining the rest, like barbarians," said Serhiy Khlan, a member of Kherson's regional legislature who is currently serving with the Ukrainian military. The Kherson regional administration headquarters on the city's main square was stripped of all computers and valuables in recent days, according to Mr. Khlan and video footage posted by Russian correspondents in the city. The building has since been taken over by squatters, including refugees from villages on the front lines.

Home to nearly 300,000 people before the war, most of Kherson has been without power, water and heating after the main power transmission line leading to it was damaged over the weekend. While Russia blamed Ukraine for the attack, Ukrainian officials said Moscow was deliberately trying to render Kherson uninhabitable so that its residents agree to evacuate.

“There is a big pressure to have them leave. The Russians want the people of Kherson to go to Russia—and then to use them as hostages,” Mr. Khlan said.

Kirill Stremousov, the Russian-appointed deputy head of Kherson’s collaboration administration, said Monday that Ukrainian infiltrator teams and the so-called “zhduny”—the local “awaiters” of a Ukrainian comeback—have intensified their activity. He pledged once again that the city wouldn’t be surrendered and said that Russia would soon bounce back to take Mykolaiv, Odessa, Dnipro and even Kyiv. In the meantime, Mr. Stremousov said, movement of civilians to the city of Kherson from other Russian-held areas across the Dnipro has been banned.

Russian military correspondents in Kherson said that local hostility was growing and that unknown assailants on Sunday slashed the tires of vehicles in the reporters’ convoy marked with the Z and V tactical signs, the symbols of support for the Russian invasion. The withdrawal of police has led to a general breakdown in law and order, some of them said.

Russia is filling the areas around Kherson city on the right bank of the Dnipro with freshly mobilized troops as more professional units are preparing for a possible pullback, Natalia Gumenyuk, a spokeswoman for Ukraine’s Southern Command, told Ukrainian TV on Monday. While frequently shelling Russian positions on both sides of the Dnipro, Ukrainian troops haven’t advanced in Kherson since taking a swath of rural terrain on the right bank of the river in mid-October.

At the very end of that month, Russian forces launched an offensive in the village of Pavlivka in the southern part of the Donetsk region, aiming to advance toward the strategic town of Vuhledar. That offensive appears to have turned into a disaster, with marines from Russia’s 155th Brigade nearly surrounded, according to multiple accounts by Russian military correspondents, analysts and Aleksandr Khodakovsky, a veteran pro-Russian commander in Donetsk.

Over the weekend, a letter written by these marines to Oleg Kozhemiako, governor of the Primorsky region in Russia’s far east, circulated on Russian social media, including the accounts of senior state media correspondents. Some 300 marines from the 155th Brigade have been killed, injured or gone missing and 50% of their armor destroyed in Pavlivka in four days of combat, the letter said, blaming the debacle on Russian generals who it said sacrifice troops for medals.

After receiving the letter, Mr. Kozhemiako said Monday that he had contacted Russian commanders in the Donbas and asked for an involvement by the prosecutor’s office. While heavy combat continues in Pavlivka, he said, he has been assured that the casualties weren’t as high as the letter asserted. In any case, Mr. Kozhemiako added, “we have faith that the commanders will take all the measures to minimize these losses.”

The Russian Ministry of Defense said Monday that the 155th Brigade is successfully advancing toward Vuhledar and rejected allegations of high losses.

In the region’s capital city of Donetsk, which has been under Russian control since 2014, Ukrainian High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or Himars, missiles struck the headquarters of the regional railways, causing a massive fire, according to Russian-appointed officials. Ukraine in recent months has repeatedly targeted Russian command centers, military bases and administrative headquarters in the city.

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HEADLINE	11/07 US Antarctica station Covid outbreak
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-u-s-research-station-in-antarctica-is-stopping-travel-after-covid-19-outbreak-11667837137?mod=hp_listb_pos5
GIST	The National Science Foundation is shutting down travel to McMurdo Station in Antarctica after nearly 10% of the population tested positive for Covid-19.

	<p>All travel to the U.S. outpost on Antarctica will be paused for the next two weeks due to the outbreak, the National Science Foundation said over the weekend. The halt on travel doesn't apply to essential travel for health and safety reasons, the foundation said.</p> <p>There are currently 64 active cases of Covid-19 at McMurdo Station, where 993 people are stationed, a spokeswoman for the National Science Foundation said Monday. There have been 98 positive tests since the beginning of October and it wasn't known which type of variant led to the outbreak, she said.</p> <p>Most of the people with infections have mild symptoms and are isolating in their rooms, the spokeswoman said. The foundation is urging the population at McMurdo Station to wear KN95 masks at all times.</p> <p>The National Science Foundation is currently assessing any impact the outbreak will have on ongoing research projects, the spokeswoman said.</p> <p>The interruption of travel comes at a time when many scientists fly to Antarctica for their field season, which typically lasts two or three months.</p> <p>McMurdo Station, established in 1955, is the largest station on the continent and is the logistics hub of the U.S. Antarctic Program, according to the National Science Foundation. Scientists perform research there examining climate systems, astrophysics, biology and other fields of science.</p> <p>The first Covid-19 cases in Antarctica were reported in December 2020 when dozens of civilian and army personnel at a Chilean research station on the continent tested positive. Chile is one of 32 countries that have outposts on the continent, according to the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Covid drag on workforce proves persistent
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-workforce-absenteeism-productivity-economy-labor-11667831493?mod=hp_major_pos1#cxrecs_s
GIST	<p>Two-and-a-half years after Covid-19 emerged, reported infections are way down, pandemic restrictions are practically gone and life in many respects is approaching normal. The labor force, however, is not.</p> <p>Researchers say the virus is having a persistent effect, keeping millions out of work and reducing the productivity and hours of millions more, disrupting business operations and raising costs.</p> <p>In the average month this year, nearly 630,000 more workers missed at least a week of work because of illness than in the years before the pandemic, according to Labor Department data. That is a reduction in workers equal to about 0.4 percent of the labor force, a significant amount in a tight labor market. That share is up about 0.1 percentage point from the same period last year, the data show.</p> <p>"That may sound tiny, but having that persistent difference over a period of two-and-a-half years is a big deal," said Jason Faberman, senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.</p> <p>Another half a million workers have dropped out of the labor force due to lingering effects from previous Covid infections, according to research by economists Gopi Shah Goda of Stanford University and Evan J. Soltas at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In a Census Bureau survey in October, 1.1 million people said they hadn't worked the week before because they were concerned about contracting or spreading the virus.</p> <p>The resulting labor shortages are contributing to upward pressure on wages and inflation, one reason the Fed delivered its fourth consecutive 0.75 percentage point interest rate increase last Wednesday. On Friday, the Labor Department reported brisk job growth in October, but health-related absences remained elevated and the labor force contracted slightly.</p>

The virus's lingering effects on staffing have forced employers to change how they operate, such as keeping more people on payroll so that work continues without interruption during surges of infections, and cross-training staff and standardizing processes so that one person's absence doesn't slow down a project. That has made many companies less efficient.

"Even if people have immunity and death rates are now much lower, they're still getting Covid. It's an incredible strain on workers, and a lot of businesses can't fill shifts," said Claudia Sahm, a former Fed economist and founder of macroeconomic policy research firm Sahm Consulting. "Every time we have a wave, it sets us back and slows down the recovery."

Richard Onken, owner of an architecture and design firm in Elkhorn, Neb., said that about 60% of his two dozen employees, many working from home, got Covid in October 2020 during an early wave. When Omicron surged early this year, about a fifth of his employees got sick, with most absences lasting three or four days.

"I think with Covid, we've gotten to the new normal," Mr. Onken said. Absences, along with people showing up but working less efficiently or at a lower capacity than normal, have bitten into productivity, he said, which makes it harder to meet clients' expectations. Absenteeism has been declining, he said, but remains a problem.

"Clients are done with the Covid excuse," he said. "They're not listening to it anymore. 'Oh, you've got someone with Covid, well, who's going to pick up the slack and take their place for a week or two while they're out?'"

Aaron Sojourner, a labor economist at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, estimates that at least one million people weren't working in October because of current or past Covid infections. Aside from a few big spikes, the number of short-term Covid absences has held relatively steady through the pandemic, on average, but the number of extended absences due to long Covid absences has been adding up.

All told, he said, "It's a drag on the economy's productive capacity and output, and creates some inflationary pressure and disruptions." These are likely to worsen if past patterns of rising infections in winter hold, he said.

Covid has played out differently in the workplace than some other notorious pandemics. The bubonic plague in the Middle Ages and the 1918 flu killed sizable percentages of working-age people. Of the more than one million Americans that Covid has killed, about 300,000 of them have been workers, equivalent to only a 0.2 percent reduction in the labor force, estimates Wells Fargo & Co. senior economist Sarah House.

Mortality has fallen significantly because of vaccines and less deadly variants, and deaths from Covid are now [concentrated heavily among the elderly](#). Still, Covid killed more than 3,200 people ages 18 to 64 in August and September, according to death certificate data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Covid keeps millions out of the labor force when they get sick, many of them staying home until they test negative or are otherwise cleared to return to the workplace. People who miss seven or more workdays because of Covid and who apply for short-term disability or apply for leave under federal or state laws are out an average of 13 workdays, according to data from Sedgwick, a large administrator of leave claims for self-insured employers.

In the average month this year, 890,000 more workers were out for at least a week because of their own illness—Covid or other—child-care problems or an unspecified reason than in the corresponding months between 2017 and 2019. In addition, in the average month, some 2.3 million employees who were normally full-time worked less than 35 hours a week due to their own illness or child-care problems. That

is about 490,000 more workers out each month, on average, than the corresponding month in the three years before the pandemic.

“It’s bound to have had an adverse effect on productivity because, if workers are absent because they happen to have Covid, that interrupts the whole flow of work,” said Robert J. Gordon, an economist at Northwestern University. His research shows that in services involving close contact among employees, productivity fell at a 0.7% annual pace during the pandemic, while remaining flat, on average, for manufacturing, and rising steadily among industries with high rates of telecommuting.

Such absences take an economic toll on households. Less than half of reported work absences for illness, child care or family or personal obligations between March 2020 and February 2022 were paid, and the burden of unpaid time off fell mostly on low-income households, according to a study by the Urban Institute, an economic and social policy research group. That added up to \$28 billion more lost to unpaid absences compared with the two years before the pandemic, the study found.

The research from Ms. Goda and Mr. Soltas, the economists, found that after workers suffered a weeklong health-related absence, they were more likely to exit from the labor force over the next 14 months. That translates to a continuing reduction in the labor force of 500,000 workers, they calculated. The average worker’s earnings fell by about \$9,000 over 14 months following a weeklong absence for health-related reasons during the pandemic, they said.

Ms. Goda said the analysis reflected the broad health consequences of Covid-19, including, among older workers, [early retirement](#).

The impact suggests the influence of long Covid—the emergence, persistence or recurrence of symptoms a month or more after an initial infection has passed. A recent CDC study found that 19% of U.S. adults who had contracted Covid, about 7.5% of the adult population, were still experiencing symptoms in June 2022, at least three months after infection. An earlier study by European and U.S. researchers, based on data from 2020, found that 2.3% of individuals who had previously tested positive for Covid were experiencing symptoms three months later.

There is no single definition of long Covid and [no diagnostic test](#) to confirm it. [Among the most common symptoms patients report](#) are fatigue, brain fog, shortness of breath, heart palpitations and headaches. Around 420,000 workers ages 16 to 64 likely left the labor force because of long Covid, according to a new analysis of disability data by Louise Sheiner and Nasiha Salwati of the Brookings Institution.

“There’s never been anything quite like this,” said David Cutler, a health economist and professor of economics at Harvard University. “It is, if you will, a mass disabling event.”

Stephannie Milton, 32, a medical biller in central Texas, got Covid in January 2021. It felt like a bad flu that lasted two weeks. Then she began experiencing migraines, and by that February she was getting them almost every day. Her employer told her to rest when a migraine came on. Then Ms. Milton began having intense pain in her back, legs and hands, and trouble focusing enough to complete tasks at work.

“Brain fog is especially insidious because you don’t realize it’s happening,” she said. “I would be at my desk trying to solve a problem that should take me 30 seconds and realize it was taking me five minutes.”

Her employer asked her to return to the office in June 2021. Worried she couldn’t drive home when a migraine came on, or rest comfortably during bouts of pain, she left her job. She and her partner went on food stamps to support their three young children. She now needs a wheelchair to get around outside her home.

After almost a year of navigating red tape, she began receiving long-term disability insurance through her previous employer in March, equal to 60% of her previous income. “I was early in my career, and I absolutely had room to grow,” she said. “But as long as this lasts, and I see no end in sight, I’ll make 60% of what I was earning at the very beginning of my career.”

Ms. Goda and Mr. Soltas, the economists, attribute nearly 60% of the loss in total income due to Covid-related illness to people leaving a job, and the remainder to those who reduced their hours or shifted to lower-paying jobs.

Part of the [weak productivity](#) may be related to burnout and the stress workers are feeling after more than two years of pandemic life. Lisa Kirk, owner of a small environmental and mineral-resource consulting firm in Bozeman, Mont., has watched employees struggle with [unpredictable child care](#), quarantines and other disruptions. Productivity has suffered, she said.

“Even parents who really kept the ball rolling through the worst of this...they’re exhausted,” she said. One employee took a partial leave. Another started putting in less effort, and no longer works at the company, she said. “I can’t run this company effectively if people are just deciding not to show up for whatever emotional reason it might be,” she said. “And they’re not saying, ‘I can’t do my job, I need help.’ They’re just not doing it.”

Even for some who don’t have Covid or long Covid, the virus is a deterrent to work. For 16 years, Jim Conway was a server at an Olive Garden restaurant near Pittsburgh. The pandemic shut down that restaurant in March 2020, and when it reopened for takeout only, Mr. Conway, 62 years old at the time, decided not to return.

Fearful of contracting the virus, he said, he retired two years ahead of schedule. “Had I been younger,” he said, “I wouldn’t have worried about it. But they were showing pictures of people going to hospitals, and I didn’t want that to be me.”

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HEADLINE	11/07 Switzerland cuts emissions via poor nations
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/07/climate/switzerland-emissions-ghana-peru-ukraine-georgia.html
GIST	<p>Switzerland, one of the world’s richest nations, has an ambitious climate goal: It promises to cut its greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030.</p> <p>But the Swiss don’t intend to reduce emissions by that much within their own borders. Instead, the European country is dipping into its sizable coffers to pay poorer nations, like Ghana or Dominica, to reduce emissions there — and give Switzerland credit for it.</p> <p>Here is an example of how it would work: Switzerland is paying to install efficient lighting and cleaner stoves in up to five million households in Ghana; these installations would help households move away from burning wood for cooking and rein in greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Then Switzerland, not Ghana, will get to count those emissions reductions as progress toward its climate goals.</p> <p>Veronika Elgart, the deputy head of international climate policy at the Federal Office for the Environment in Switzerland, said these sorts of arrangements could bring on additional climate action while benefiting the host countries.</p> <p>Still, there are questions over whether this mechanism is fair — an issue at the heart of discussions at this week’s United Nations climate conference in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. One of the main diplomatic sticking points centers on the extent to which rich nations should be compensating poorer countries for the damage caused by climate change, and helping them adapt, particularly since the wealthier world is disproportionately responsible for the carbon dioxide emissions warming the world.</p> <p>If other nations follow Switzerland’s lead, critics say, it could delay climate action in wealthier parts of the world while shifting the work of reducing emissions toward the global poor. In addition, it could take</p>

advantage of projects in poorer countries that would have proceeded anyway, with or without foreign funding.

“It’s a way of passing on the responsibility to reduce emissions,” said Crispin Gregoire, a former ambassador to the United Nations from Dominica, a tiny island nation of 72,000 people that made an agreement with Switzerland last year. “Instead of reducing emissions itself, Switzerland is going to other countries — ones that have very low emissions — to fulfill that obligation.”

At last year’s global climate summit in Glasgow, President Luis Arce of Bolivia called the idea tantamount to “carbon capitalism.”

The 2015 Paris Agreement tentatively allowed countries to cooperate in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. And nations have made progress in laying down some of the rules at global talks — for example, creating guidance to make sure that emissions reductions aren’t double counted.

But much of how that would actually work still needs to be fine-tuned, including how projects will be assessed and monitored. The issues are part of a wide-ranging agenda for climate negotiators gathered in Egypt this week.

Switzerland has been explicit that it won’t reach its emissions reduction targets on its own, and that it needs to look for at least a third of its cuts elsewhere. It already generates the bulk of its electricity using renewable energy — namely, hydroelectric and nuclear power — making further emissions cuts difficult.

Switzerland has so far signed pacts with eight nations — Peru, Ghana, Senegal, Georgia, Vanuatu, Dominica, Thailand and Ukraine — and is in talks with at least three more nations. Japan and Sweden have said they intend to pursue similar arrangements.

There is concern that deals like these could end up funding projects that might have already been in the works, said Thomas Day, an expert in carbon markets at the NewClimate Institute, an organization in Cologne, Germany, that advocates bolder climate policies.

For example, the Swiss initially aimed to invest in making public buildings in Georgia more energy efficient. But Georgia was already planning those upgrades. That meant Switzerland would have gotten credit for emissions cuts that would have happened anyway, he said. Then, Georgia would have to take on more difficult or expensive projects to further meet its own targets, while in effect giving the Swiss credit for the easier work.

Rich nations like Switzerland have an obligation to help developing nations without claiming something in return, said Jade Begay, the climate justice director at NDN Collective, an Indigenous-led social and environmental organization based in Rapid City, S.D.

The rule that allows such deals is “dangerous,” Ms. Begay said, because it allows wealthier countries “to continue polluting, and to continue with business as usual, which is the root of the problem.”

Mischa Classen, the director at the KliK Foundation, a nonprofit in Switzerland that is working with the government to implement the agreements, said Switzerland was now planning to fund more ambitious policies in Georgia, like investing in energy efficiency for private homes.

And Georgia can authorize or reject projects covered under the agreement, Ms. Elgart, the Swiss government official, said. Its partner countries are “in the driving seat,” she said. Switzerland will also ensure that the projects would not have happened otherwise, she added.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia did not respond to a request for comment.

	<p>The debate comes as rich nations of the world, face criticism for failing to compensate poorer nations as promised so they can better adapt to warming temperatures.</p> <p>According to an analysis by the Overseas Development Institute, Switzerland’s contributions to global climate funding fall almost 40 percent short of what would be their share of an internationally agreed target of \$100 billion a year. It is also falling behind on its goals for emissions reductions under the Paris accord.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 ‘Technical problem’ delays Powerball draw
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/7/powerball-drawing-delayed-technical-problem/
GIST	<p>The richest lottery drawing in U.S. history was delayed Monday night.</p> <p>The drawing for a \$1.9 billion jackpot was delayed because of a technical issue, according to the video posted of the live drawing at 11 p.m. Monday.</p> <p>“Because of a technical problem tonight, we are unable to bring you the Powerball drawing at this time,” presenter Laura Johnson told millions of viewers.</p> <p>“As soon as we are able to resolve the issue and conduct the drawing,” the video of the drawing will be available on the official Powerball site, she said.</p> <p>In a statement, Powerball announced that the delay was “due to a participating lottery needing extra time to complete the required security protocols.”</p> <p>The game’s rules require that any drawing “be delayed until we can be sure that all game procedures can be successfully completed,” Ms. Johnson said.</p> <p>Lottery officials did not publicly say how long the delay might be, but according to The Hill, a drawing in April was delayed for more than four hours over a security issue.</p> <p>The prize has grown to \$1.9 billion because nobody has picked all six numbers since Aug. 3, 40 drawings ago, and recent changes such as expanding to three drawings a week have encouraged, in Powerball’s words, “larger, faster-growing jackpots.”</p> <p>If Monday’s drawing still does not produce a winner, not only will it set a record of 41 straight games without a winner but Wednesday’s contest will certainly top \$2 billion.</p> <p>Only four previous times in U.S. history has a lottery jackpot reached even half that.</p> <p>If taken in a single lump sum of cash, as most recent big lottery winners have chosen to do, the \$1.9 billion prize would be worth \$929.1 million. The larger, advertised amount is what the other option — a 29-year annuity — would be worth over its lifetime.</p> <p>Federal taxes would quickly take almost 40% of that amount, with state taxes a possibility on top of that.</p> <p>The \$2 Powerball tickets are sold in 45 states, along with the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.</p> <p>The odds of a winning Powerball ticket are 1 in 292.2 million.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 China decries UK minister visit to Taiwan
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/nov/7/china-lashes-out-at-visit-by-uk-trade-minister-gre/

GIST	<p>BEIJING — China lashed out Monday over a visit to Taiwan by British Trade Policy Minister Greg Hands, the latest foreign official to defy Beijing’s warnings over contacts with the self-governing island republic.</p> <p>China claims Taiwan as its own territory and threatens to annex it by force. It also seeks to isolate it diplomatically, requiring governments that it has formal relations with to respect its “one-China” principle.</p> <p>The U.K. should “earnestly respect China’s sovereignty, uphold the one-China principle, stop any forms of official contacts with Taiwan and stop sending wrong signals to Taiwan independence separatist forces,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing.</p> <p>The British government said Hands was on a two-day visit during which he would meet Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen and co-host the 25th annual trade talks between the sides. China has imposed visa bans and other forms of retaliation against foreign officials and governments that extend contacts to Taiwan.</p> <p>Taiwan has formal diplomatic ties with just 14 nations and is excluded from the United Nations and other major multinational groupings at Beijing’s insistence. Yet, its thriving democracy, high-tech economy and strategic location in the Asia-Pacific have drawn strong support in spite of Beijing’s condemnations and threats.</p> <p>Following a visit to Taiwan by Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the U.S. House and second in line to the presidency, China fired missiles over Taiwan into the Western Pacific and positioned aircraft and ships nearby in a virtual blockade of the island.</p> <p>Such moves appear to have had little effect and visits from European and North American elected officials have continued.</p> <p>Referring to Tsai’s ruling party and its strong backing from the U.S. and other Western democracies, Zhao warned Taiwan officials that “their attempt to seek independence with foreign support is doomed to fail.”</p> <p>Beijing’s close ties with Moscow following the Russian invasion of Ukraine have complicated matters further.</p> <p>Latvia and Estonia left a Chinese-backed forum aimed at boosting relations with Eastern European countries following China’s boosting of its relations with Russia. China has refused to criticize Russia over its attack on Ukraine and has condemned economic sanctions imposed on Moscow by the West.</p> <p>Russia’s struggles in Ukraine have meanwhile refocused attention on China’s possible military intentions toward Taiwan. That has prompted a new emphasis on the island’s fighting forces and technology to thwart Chinese aggression.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 China’s super-rich see fortunes plunge
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/08/hurun-rich-list-china-super-rich-see-fortunes-plunge-as-economy-slows
GIST	<p>China’s super-rich saw their wealth fall by the largest amount in over two decades, as the Russia-Ukraine war, Beijing’s zero-Covid measures and falling local stock markets pummelled fortunes, an annual rich list showed.</p> <p>The Hurun Rich list, which ranks China’s wealthiest people with a minimum net worth of 5 billion yuan (\$690m), said only 1,305 people made the threshold this year, down 11% from last year. Their total wealth was \$3.5tn, down 18% from last year.</p>

The number of individuals with \$10bn or more fell by 29, and the number of billionaires, in US dollars, dropped by 239 this year, according to the list.

“This year has seen the biggest fall in the Hurun China Rich List of the last 24 years,” said Rupert Hoogewerf, chairman and chief researcher of Hurun Report which compiles the list.

The global economic outlook has been heavily affected by the war in Ukraine and slowing economic growth in China, that has in turn been exacerbated by the country’s ultra-strict Covid policies and a prolonged property slump.

The International Monetary Fund forecasts China’s economy will expand only 3.2% in 2022, which would be the slowest rate since the 1980s, excluding the 2.4% Covid-affected pace in 2020.

A two-year regulatory crackdown that has hit China’s biggest tech names such as Alibaba Group and Tencent Holdings, and concerns that President Xi Jinping will sacrifice economic growth for ideology, have also weighed on investor confidence, with Hong Kong and mainland stock markets tumbling in recent weeks.

Zhong Shanshan, whose listed companies include water bottler Nongfu Spring and vaccine developer Beijing Wantai Biological Pharmacy Enterprise, took first place on the list for the second year running, with a fortune that grew 17% to \$65bn.

The founder of ByteDance, which owns TikTok, Zhang Yiming, took second place, but saw his wealth fall 28% to \$35bn due to a drop in ByteDance’s valuation. In third place was Zeng Yuqun, chairman of battery giant CATL.

Yang Huiyan, the businesswoman behind Country Garden Holdings, which like many other Chinese developers has been battling debt issues, saw her wealth fall by \$15.7bn, the biggest drop on the 2022 list.

Tencent founder Pony Ma posted the second largest drop, falling \$14.6bn amid sliding tech stock prices, to take fifth place on the list. Alibaba founder Jack Ma and his family tumbled four places to be ranked number nine.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Russia conscripts: hundreds killed in attack
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/we-were-completely-exposed-russian-conscripts-say-hundreds-killed-in-attack
GIST	<p>Hours after Aleksei Agafonov arrived in the Luhansk region on 1 November as part of a battalion of new conscripts, his unit were handed shovels and ordered to dig trenches throughout the night.</p> <p>Their digging, which they took turns to do because of the lack of available shovels, was abruptly interrupted in the early hours of the next day as Ukrainian artillery lit up the sky and shells started raining down on Agafonov and his unit.</p> <p>“A Ukrainian drone first flew over us, and after that their artillery started to pound us for hours and hours, nonstop,” Agafonov, who survived the shelling, told the Guardian in a phone interview on Monday.</p> <p>“I saw men being ripped apart in front of me, most of our unit is gone, destroyed. It was hell,” he said, adding that his unit’s commanders abandoned them just before the shelling started.</p> <p>Agafonov was called up on 16 October alongside 570 other conscripts in Voronezh, a city in the south-west of Russia, as part of Vladimir Putin’s nationwide mobilisation push that has seen more than 300,000 men drafted to go and fight in a war that the Kremlin calls its “special military operation”.</p>

After the attacks stopped, Agafonov, with roughly a dozen other soldiers, retreated from the forest outside the Luhansk town of Makiivka to the nearby Russian-controlled city of Svatove. In Svatove, Agafonov and his group moved into a deserted building, trying to contact other mobilised soldiers who had been with him that night.

According to Agafonov's estimates, only 130 draftees out of the 570 survived the Ukrainian attack, which would make it the deadliest known incident involving conscripts since the start of the mobilisation drive at the end of September.

"And many who survived are losing their minds after what happened. No one wants to go back," Agafonov said.

The incident points to Russia's willingness to throw hundreds of ill-prepared conscripts on to the frontline in Ukraine's east, where some of the heaviest fighting has been taking place, in an effort to stem Kyiv's advances.

There is growing anger in Russia as more coffins return from Ukraine, bringing home the remains of conscripts.

Some of the details surrounding last week's shelling could not be independently verified. But the Guardian spoke to a second soldier, as well as two family members of surviving soldiers, who gave similar accounts.

"We were completely exposed, we had no idea what to do. Hundreds of us died," said the second soldier, who asked to remain anonymous. "Two weeks of training doesn't prepare you for this," he said, referring to the limited military training conscripts received prior to being sent to Ukraine.

The Russian investigative outlet Verstka, which first reported on the incident on Saturday, cited the account of a third soldier, Nikolai Voronin, who similarly described coming under Ukrainian fire in the early hours of 2 November.

"There were lots of dead, they were lying everywhere ... Their arms and legs were torn off," Voronin told Verstka. "The shovels we used to dig our trenches were now being used to dig out the dead."

The shelling has led to anguish in Voronezh, where a group of wives of the mobilised men recorded an angry video message on Saturday addressing the local governor.

"On the very first day, they put the draftees on the frontline. The command left the battlefield and fled," Inna Voronina, the wife of a drafted soldier whose fate is unknown, said in the video.

The mother of another soldier can be heard saying: "They tell us over the phone that our sons are alive and healthy and even fulfilling their military duty. How the hell are they alive and healthy when they were all killed there?"

Last Friday, Putin boasted that Russia had mobilised 318,000 people into its armed forces, citing a high number of "volunteers". He went on to invoke the popular Russian saying "we don't leave our own behind", claiming the phrase was "not empty words".

But the chaotic mobilisation campaign, and the casualties that have followed since, have drawn criticism among even the most enthusiastic supporters of the war.

In a scathing statement on Telegram, Anastasia Kashevarova, a well-connected pro-war journalist, condemned Russian commanders on the ground who she said were mobilising untrained men.

"Groups of [mobilised men] are abandoned without communication, without the necessary weapons, without medicines, without the support of artillery," she said. "Zinc coffins are already coming. You told us that there would be training, that they would not be sent to the frontline in a week. Did you lie again?"

In one video, purportedly filmed at a training centre in Kazan, the capital of Russia's Tatarstan region, dozens of recently mobilised men are seen berating its military leadership over a lack of pay, water and food. An officer identified as Maj Gen Kirill Kulakov is seen retreating as the large crowd of enraged conscripts shout insults at him.

Perhaps sensing the growing discontent, Putin said on Monday that he planned to "personally discuss with Russians" the issues surrounding support for the mobilised. He urged local officials to "pay attention" to mobilised soldiers and their needs.

Despite the seemingly high costs, the mobilisation drive has so far not resulted in Russia gaining new ground, according to a recent report from the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based thinktank.

The report said the Russian army was "wasting the fresh supply of mobilised personnel on marginal gains" instead of massing sufficient soldiers to ensure success.

"Russian forces would likely have had more success in such offensive operations if they had waited until enough mobilised personnel had arrived to amass a force large enough to overcome Ukrainian defences," the institute said last Thursday.

In another sign indicating poor morale and communications at the front, several pro-Kremlin journalists published an open letter reportedly from an elite Russian naval infantry unit that criticised its superiors' decision-making after huge losses in what it called an "incomprehensible" assault on the village of Pavlivka.

Russian forces launched an offensive on Pavlivka, south-west of Donetsk, on 2 November, according to the Ukrainian military and pro-Russia officials. Four days later, the 155th Guards Naval Infantry Brigade reportedly accused its military leaders of the loss of 300 men in a letter to Oleg Kozhemyako, the governor of their home region in the far-east of Russia.

"We were thrown into an incomprehensible offensive," the letter was quoted as saying by a number of prominent pro-war bloggers.

While the Guardian was not able to independently verify the contents of the letter, Kozhemyako appeared to acknowledge that it was genuine but said it overstated the true scale of the losses.

"We contacted the commanders. Yes, there are losses, there's heavy fighting, but they are far from what is written in this appeal," he said in a video statement on his Telegram channel. "I am sure that in any case the situation will be analysed and the competent authorities will give their assessment."

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HEADLINE	11/07 Iran internal rift over drones to Russia
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/row-breeds-in-iran-over-use-of-its-drones-in-ukraine-war-by-russia
GIST	<p>An internal rift over the supply of deadly drones to Russia for use in Ukraine has opened up in Iran, with a prominent conservative cleric and newspaper editor saying Russia is the clear aggressor in the war and the supply should stop.</p> <p>A former Iranian ambassador to Moscow has also hinted the foreign ministry may have been kept in the dark both by the Kremlin and the Iranian military.</p> <p>Iran has denied for more than two months that it sold the drones to Russia despite their use to target power stations and civilian infrastructure, but at the weekend said it had supplied a small number of drones before the war started, an explanation that has been rejected by the US and Ukraine.</p>

The row over the drones reflects a wider foreign policy debate in Tehran about the risks of developing close links with Moscow. It is also unusual, in that the criticism of Iran's government is being led by a conservative cleric and a newspaper editor.

In remarks picked up by other Iranian newspapers, Masih Mohajeri, writing on the front page of the newspaper Jomhuri-e-Islami, highlighted three things the government should have done: advised the party that started the war, ie [Russia](#), to observe international regulations that prohibit encroachment on the territory of other countries; told Russia at the outset of the war that it had no right to use the drones in Ukraine that Iran had provided; maintained stronger relations with the invaded country.

Addressing the Iranian foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, he added: "Why did you not announce to Russia after the start of the war in Ukraine that it has no right to use Iranian drones in the war in Ukraine? Furthermore, why have you not openly condemned Russia for starting the war and why have you not made a redoubled effort to mediate between the two sides to end this evil war?"

He said Iran could have played this role without damaging its relations with Russia.

Abdollahian at the weekend ended weeks of prevarication in Iran over the drones by admitting – while stood next to the Russian deputy foreign minister, Sergei Vershinin, on the sidelines of an international conference – that it had provided a small number of drones before the war. He said if it was proven by Ukraine that its drones were being used in the war, Iran would not be indifferent.

Ukraine believes Moscow acquired 2,400 drones from Iran, including the distinctive triangle-shaped Shahed-136 "kamikaze" drone that detonates on impact.

Mohajeri described the foreign minister's change of stance as a "good omen" in his newspaper article. "You still have time to change policy on the war in Ukraine," he said. "You should not put all your eggs in the Russian basket. This method contradicts the policy of 'neither east nor west' which is the core of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He added: "The least that ... Iran could have done in the war in Ukraine was to first negotiate with both sides by forming a mediation committee to get them to agree to a ceasefire and an end to the war. In the very days of the beginning of the war, Tehran could have announced to Moscow that it has no right to use the drones provided by Iran in the war on Ukraine."

Robert Malley, the US special envoy on Iran, dismissed Iran's admission. "The evidence is clear: the drones sold to Russia are being used against Ukrainian civilians. Perhaps Iran's leaders thought they could escape the consequences of secretly helping Russia's brutal aggression, but they couldn't."

A former Iranian ambassador to Moscow, Nematollah Izadi, said it appeared there had been no proper cooperation between the military and diplomatic wings of the Iranian state, possibly leaving the foreign ministry in the dark. It seemed one section of the government thought it profitable to sell drones to Moscow for the use in the war or otherwise, Izadi said, and "we seem to have succumbed to a deception operation by Russia, which, in my opinion, does not serve our national interests at all".

An unofficial adviser to the Iranian negotiating team on the future of the Iran nuclear deal, Seyed Mohammad Marandi, however, exemplified the opposition to Ukraine within parts of the regime, by criticising the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, for sending congratulations to the newly-elected Israeli government. "When Zelenskyy says 'real democracy in action' and that the two regimes 'share common values' he means they both treat subjugated ethnic Russian Ukrainians and the indigenous population of Palestine with similar racial contempt," he tweeted.

Street protests against the regime that began after the death in September of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was detained by police for allegedly violating the country's strict hijab law, appeared to be

	<p>slowing, but at the weekend two victorious Iranian international sports teams – the Iranian beach football team and the wrestling team – refused to celebrate their victories.</p> <p>The scorer of Iran’s decisive goal in the final of the Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup against Brazil symbolically cut his hair after his shot went into the net in an apparent show of solidarity with the female demonstrators. Many of the spectators in Dubai either booed the national anthem or chanted against the government outside the stadium.</p> <p>Fierce debate rages within the regime about the appropriate response to the protests, ranging from some conservative MPs demanding executions to others calling for self-reflection about how the principles of the revolution have lost traction with a generation.</p> <p>Some leaders frankly admit bewilderment. Tourism and culture minister Ezzatollah Zarghami said on Sunday that that one of the interrogators of the thousands of detained protesters admitted that he did not understand them. “I have interrogated big political figures for a lifetime, and in the past few days I have interrogated hundreds of people,” Zarghami said the investigator had told him. “This was my most difficult interrogation because I do not understand what they are saying and they do not understand what I am saying. No matter how hard I try, I cannot.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 US talks Russia on nuclear risk in Ukraine?
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/us-talks-russia-on-nuclear-war-risk-in-ukraine
GIST	<p>The US national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, has reportedly held talks with aides to Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, with the aim of reducing the risk that the war in Ukraine could spill over or escalate into a nuclear conflict.</p> <p>The Wall Street Journal said the senior White House figure had held confidential conversations in recent months with the Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov and Russian security council secretary, Nikolai Patrushev, Sullivan’s counterpart, that were not made public.</p> <p>Neither Washington or Moscow has confirmed if the talks took place and the report did not detail the time or dates of the phone calls.</p> <p>The Kremlin spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, declined to comment on the report at his daily briefing. “Once again I repeat that there are some truthful reports, but for the most part there are reports that are pure speculation,” he told reporters.</p> <p>In September, Russia started ratcheting up the idea that it may use nuclear weapons as it set the stage for the illegal annexation of parts of southern and eastern Ukraine, saying Ukrainian attacks on them would be considered a threat to Russia’s national security, which would be defended against using all available means.</p> <p>Sullivan warned that month that any use of nuclear weapons by the Kremlin would have “catastrophic consequences for Russia”, which the US had “spelled out” in private conversations with Russian officials, he told NBC.</p> <p>Analysts at the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a Washington DC-based thinktank, noted last week that Russia had notably softened its nuclear rhetoric since early November.</p> <p>Russia’s foreign ministry issued a statement on 2 November about “the inadmissibility of a nuclear war in which there can be no winners” and said it was committed to reducing nuclear weapons. Putin went so far as to claim Russia had never discussed the possibility of using nuclear weapons.</p> <p>Shortly before what the west called sham referendums in parts of Ukraine Russia had said it intended to annex, Putin claimed without evidence that the west had threaten to use nuclear weapons against Russia.</p>

“When the territorial integrity of our country is threatened, we, of course, will use all the means at our disposal to protect Russia and our people,” said Putin. “This is not a bluff. And those who try to blackmail us with nuclear weapons should know that the weathervane can turn and point towards them.”

More recently, Russia had made claims, without providing evidence, that Kyiv was preparing to use a radioactive dirty bomb. Ukraine said it feared that Russia was preparing a false-flag nuclear attack, which it would then blame on Kyiv.

Throughout the war, the US has had the tricky task of supporting Ukraine to defend itself against Russia, while maintaining some distance to avoid giving cause for escalation. For this reason, the US and other key western allies of Ukraine, such as the UK, have ruled out putting boots on the ground or establishing a no-fly zone that could put Nato and Russian forces into direct conflict.

The US defence secretary, Lloyd Austin, said in late October that it was important to keep channels of communication open with Russia to “manage escalation”, specifying his main concern was Russia’s nuclear rhetoric, but did not say if or how often such channels were being used.

“We’re going to continue to communicate that any type of use of a weapon of that sort, or even the talk of the use of a weapon of that sort, is dangerous and irresponsible,” said Austin.

Though nuclear tensions appear to have subsided for now, the ISW said Russia may return to nuclear brinkmanship again to prompt the west to pressure Ukraine into negotiating.

Russia is trying to regain the advantage in Ukraine after a series of retreats in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions. So far, its strategy, it seems, is to disable Ukraine in the rear by cutting off its power supplies over winter, while using its newly mobilised troops to gain and regain ground on the frontlines.

Ukraine’s western allies reportedly envisage negotiations beginning after Ukraine has retaken the Kherson region, so that Kyiv will start from a point of strength, Italy’s La Repubblica reported on Monday. On Saturday, the Washington Post said that the US was urging Kyiv to be more open to talks amid worries from allies in parts of Europe, Africa and Latin America of a protracted war with devastating economic effects.

A senior adviser to Ukraine’s president said on Monday that Kyiv had never refused to negotiate with Moscow, but restated it would not hold talks while Vladimir Putin was in power. “Ukraine has never refused to negotiate. Our negotiating position is known and open,” Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter, saying that Russia should first withdraw its troops from Ukraine. “Is Putin ready? Obviously not. Therefore, we are constructive in our assessment: we will talk with the next leader.”

On Monday, Peskov said Russia was open to talks but it was Ukraine that was refusing. Both Ukraine and the US, its main western ally, say Russia has yet to show it is serious about negotiations, pointing to Russia’s recent mobilisation drive, rerouting of its economy for the war effort, the illegal annexation of more Ukrainian territory and the accompanying nuclear rhetoric.

In his nightly address on Monday, Volodymyr Zelenskiy said it was vital to oblige Russia to participate in “genuine” peace talks, describing the country as a destabilising force on a range of issues, including climate change.

He decried “Russia’s destabilising influence” as the world confronted war, energy and food crises, and what he called the destruction of customary international relations. The climate agenda, he said, was “really suffering” but could not be “put on hold”.

“So anyone serious about the climate agenda must also be serious about the need to immediately stop Russian aggression, restore our territorial integrity, and force Russia into genuine peace negotiations,” Zelenskiy said.

	<p>Despite its struggle to make headway on the battlefield, Russia has had significant success in striking Ukraine's energy sector thanks to Iranian-supplied drones, which are reportedly making up for its rapidly depleting stockpiles of missiles and rockets.</p> <p>Kyiv's mayor, Vitali Klitschko, has told residents to prepare for longer cuts and make arrangements to leave the city in the event of a total blackout.</p> <p>Obtaining additional air defence systems and ammunition has become Kyiv's number one priority in recent weeks. Last week, Germany sent an Iris-T system and on Monday, Ukraine's minister of defence, Oleksiy Reznikov, welcomed Nasams and Aspide air defence systems, thanking Norway, Spain and the US.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Day 258 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/08/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-258-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine said its position on negotiations with Russia had not changed and it is not being asked to negotiate by its allies, after reports by the Washington Post that its main ally and backer, the US, had asked Kyiv to signal that it is open to negotiations amid worry among allies in parts of Europe, Latin American, and Africa about a protracted war. Ukrainian presidential adviser, Mykhailo Podalyak, told Radio Svoboda, that Ukraine will only negotiate with Russia once Russian troops have left all of Ukraine's territory, including those it occupied in 2014. Podalyak said that the US treats Ukraine as an equal and there is no coercion. He said Ukraine is winning and therefore to sit down at the negotiating table now would be "nonsense". • The secretary of Ukraine's Security Council said on Tuesday the "main condition" for the resumption of negotiations with Russia would be the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity. Oleksiy Danilov said that Ukraine also needed the "guarantee" of modern air defences, aircraft, tanks and long-range missiles. • Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has claimed his forces are gradually pushing back Russian troops in some parts of the east and south. "We are gradually moving forward," he said in his latest Monday evening address. Zelenskyy added that Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region remains the centre of Ukraine's bloodiest battles, claiming Russians "die by the hundreds every day". • One of the Russian-imposed leaders in the occupied Kherson region of Ukraine, Kirill Stremousov, has claimed on Telegram: "The situation in the morning is unchanged along the entire frontline. We do not see any kind of mass offensive. At this stage, everything is unchanged and without difficult moments for our region." • The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, will join next week's G20 leaders summit "if the situation is possible", his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo, the meeting's host said Tuesday, adding that Putin could attend virtually instead. On Monday Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Putin would decide by the end of the week if he was attending the summit. • Ukrainians continue to brace for more blackouts after the country's grid operator told consumers to expect power outages in Kyiv and other regions on Monday and Tuesday as it seeks to reduce the strain on energy infrastructure damaged by Russian missile and drone attacks. Rolling blackouts are becoming increasingly routine after a wave of Russian attacks on power facilities damaged 40% of energy infrastructure since 10 October. • Mikhail Razvozhayev, the governor of Sevastopol in Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, said this morning that air defences in the city shot down a Ukrainian drone. • Russia and the US are discussing holding talks on strategic nuclear weapons for the first time since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine, Russian newspaper Kommersant reports, citing at least three sources familiar with the discussions. • Swedish prime minister Ulf Kristersson will seek Turkey's approval for his country's bid to join Nato during talks later Tuesday in Ankara with president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further 30 Ukrainian service personnel who were captured from Ukraine's Zmiinyi (Snake) Island have been released from Russian captivity, according to the Ukrainian parliament's commissioner for human rights. • Ukraine received more air defence systems from western allies, defence minister Oleksiy Reznikov announced on Monday. Included in the military aid are national advanced surface-to-air missile System (Nasams) and Italian aspide air defences. "These weapons will significantly strengthen the Ukrainian army and will make our skies safer," Reznikov said. "Thank you to our partners – Norway, Spain and the US," he added. • Ukraine has accused Russian troops of looting and occupying empty homes in the southern city of Kherson to prepare for street fighting in what both sides predict will be one of the war's most important battles. In recent days, Russia has ordered civilians out of Kherson in anticipation of a Ukrainian assault to recapture the city, the only regional capital Moscow has seized since its invasion in February. Kherson was also cut off from water and electricity supplies on Sunday after an airstrike and damage to the Kakhovka dam, local officials said. • Putin has said 50,000 Russian soldiers called up as part of his mobilisation drive were now fighting with combat units in Ukraine, the Interfax news agency reported. Putin said 80,000 were "in the zone of the special military operation" – the term Russia uses for its war in Ukraine – and the rest of the almost 320,000 draftees were at training camps in Russia. • However criticism is brewing over the chaotic mobilisation campaign as Russian conscripts say hundreds were killed in an attack. Moscow's willingness to throw hundreds of ill-prepared conscripts on to the frontline in Ukraine's east has prompted growing anger in Russia as more coffins return from Ukraine. Last Friday, Putin boasted that Russia had mobilised 318,000 people into its armed forces, citing a high number of "volunteers". • Zelenskiy made a pitch for closer security ties with Israel on Monday, saying both countries faced similar threats. "I think it is clear to everyone what Ukraine emphasises and the security emphasis of Israel," he said in his nightly address after a conversation with Benjamin Netanyahu, the winner in last week's Israeli election. "I believe we can significantly strengthen our states, especially since the threats we have are related." • An internal rift over the supply of deadly drones to Russia for use in Ukraine has opened up in Iran, with a prominent conservative cleric and newspaper editor saying Russia is the clear aggressor in the war and the supply should stop. Iran has denied it sold drones to Russia despite their use to target power stations and civilian infrastructure, but at the weekend said it had supplied a small number of drones before the war started, an explanation that has been rejected by the US and Ukraine. • North Korea said it has never had arms dealings with Russia and has no plans to do so, its state media reported, after the US claimed it appeared to be supplying Russia with artillery shells for its war in Ukraine. A North Korean defence ministry official called the allegations a rumour and said Pyongyang has "never had 'arms dealings' with Russia" and has "no plan to do so in the future," according to a Reuters report.
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HEADLINE	11/07 Critical shortage in early childhood learning
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/early-childhood-learning-faces-critical-shortage-snohomish-county-childcare-deserts-early-childhood-education-washington-state-ymca#
GIST	<p>MILL CREEK, Wash. — It's no secret that childcare of any kind is expensive. Add early learning to that care and the price goes up, but this is what more and more research is now showing kids really need, before they enter kindergarten.</p> <p>"There's a sharp correlation between investments and kids in early years, paying off in graduation college entrance later success in life, that are all really tightly correlated," said Dr. Stephan Blanford, the executive director at the Children's Alliance.</p> <p>While these centers do exist, they're becoming scarcer with the cost of hiring and keeping qualified workers.</p>

“There are childcare deserts in Washington state with very few childcare services,” said Dr. Blanford.

Snohomish County is one of those deserts. The YMCA Heatherwood Early Education Center in Mill Creek increased wages and added more benefits, to retain its staff, back in January. It’s licensed for 86 kids, but right now it's got 130 families on its waitlist.

“You have to basically, as soon as you find out you’re pregnant get on the waitlist,” said Jessica Shay. Her 4-year-old daughter Juniper attends that YMCA center. Shay said she put Juniper on the wait list in January in 2019 and didn’t get a space until October of that year. And that, she adds, was pre-pandemic.

The wait, she said was worth it.

“She is a very precocious kid, and she wants to know everything. And she loves learning. She loves telling people she’s in pre-K. She likes keeping her mind busy,” said Shay.

Plus, she sees that Juniper and the other kids are learning more than just their alphabet.

“They're learning the language of like keeping yourself out of other people’s body space and respecting your friends and respecting boundaries,” said Shay.

This is something Carlos Pineda said he saw very often, during his last job as a mental health counselor. He worked in the prison system, before transitioning to early learning, with kids. He said, he believes many of the inmates he worked with, may have been able to avoid the jail cell, had they had different care and learning opportunities as a child.

“And you kind of have the mindset and the (realization) of, okay, where can we stop this before it turns into this,” he said.

“Whether that’s curriculum based or mental health, behavioral specialists, doesn’t matter, just as long as their supported and safe,” he said.

When asked about his role in early education Pineda said, “It’s a walking hug, being able to go into a classroom and all the kids know that they are safe to talk to you.”

Pineda, and others, said it's critical to get kids into programs early, to start learning, and get the social-emotional support and coping skills they need to succeed later in life.

“It saves a lot of money down the road and a lot of resources. If we can stop the problem now,” said Pineda.

This is part of the reason that Snohomish County is investing millions of dollars in childcare and early learning; for the good of children and for more of their parents to be able to get back to work.

“There’s no area of employment in the county where we have not heard that people are struggling to get people back to work,” said County Executive Dave Somers.

“I am a single mom and the Y offers financial assistance if you qualify so that was a big plus for me because daycare is also very expensive. We live with my mom, and she pays the majority of the rent and that’s the only way that we survive because it’s basically like a mortgage payment just send your kids to daycare,” said Shay.

The cost at the YMCA is about \$1,500 a month for pre-k students, but more than \$2,000 a month for infants since they require more staffing. Plus the Y said there's tuition help for those who want to get into this field.

HEADLINE	11/07 Spokane homeless take on winter weather
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/spokanes-homeless-population-winter-weather/293-be65ac15-14aa-4fe6-858b-077e92c9848f
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — When temperatures drop, the last place you may want to be is outside. But, living outside is the reality for the reported 400 people staying at the homeless encampment near I-90 and Freya.</p> <p>So, for executive director of Jewels Helping Hands Julie Garcia, that means it's time to make sure there are resources to keep these people safe.</p> <p>"Our goal is to provide as many safe and warm places as possible," Garcia said.</p> <p>She said churches have provided warm water tanks and hundreds of sleeping bags. Extra Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) security is keeping an eye on burn barrels to keep people warm, but also make sure property doesn't catch on fire.</p> <p>She said there is also a warming tent inside the camp that operates 24 hours a day. But, there are still challenges.</p> <p>"Every morning we do tent checks at 6 a.m. That means we go tent to tent and make sure everyone survived the night," Garcia explained. "As much padding as we can give them, they're still outside in this weather."</p> <p>But, Garcia said she needs more help from the city.</p> <p>"We need a warming center," Garcia said. "Just like we did every year in the past. There are still folks throughout our county that need a place to go and not die in the winter."</p> <p>The city is encouraging people to use available shelter space to find warmth.</p> <p>According to the city, 30% of shelter space was in use as of last Wednesday.</p> <p>Garcia said for those who are ready, her organization is helping to move people to the Trent shelter, 3 miles from the camp.</p> <p>As of Sunday night, the Trent shelter reported 223 people in-house. With 250 beds and 100 mats, the shelter is able to hold 350 people.</p> <p>But with over 400 people at the camp and people staying on the streets downtown, it's a numbers game to find everyone a warm place to stay.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 WSDOT, Everett at odds over homeless
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/wsdot-responds-to-everetts-mayor-on-homeless-encampment-work
GIST	<p>EVERETT, Wash. - It appears the City of Everett and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) are at odds, after the state's "Right of Way Safety Initiative" began work in Everett.</p> <p>The program clears out homeless encampments on WSDOT property while ensuring the people living in those camps are provided housing.</p> <p>Mayor Cassie Franklin got word of people being housed in Everett, and took to Twitter blasting the work. In a release sent out Friday, the Everett mayor called it an "unacceptable burden for our city to bear."</p>

Franklin wrote that she was informed that a large number of unsheltered individuals were being brought from outside of Everett and placed in motels throughout the city.

She urged WSDOT to discontinue the practice.

WSDOT, however, had a very different take – noting that only three people had received services to date. It's unclear if they were sent to motels or more permanent housing.

According to WSDOT, Everett Police and the city's homeless coordinator were involved with the work that's taken place, too.

The secretary of WSDOT, along with the Washington State Department of Commerce and Washington State Patrol – the other entities working on the initiative– took the rare step of publicizing its direct response to the mayor due to "mischaracterizations" per an e-mail shared with FOX 13.

"You attempted to shame our agencies and accused us of transporting people experiencing homelessness across county lines, an accusation that is patently false and offensive," the letter read – going on to demand a retraction.

The blowback comes less than a week after Gov. Jay Inslee celebrated the early successes of the program. The legislature earmarked \$300 million for this work earlier this year.

Inslee said it's proof that we can simultaneously clean up highways while saving lives. He even celebrated the collaboration they've seen.

"The state is not the only player in this game," he said during a media event last week. "To be successful, we have to work with all levels of government and nonprofits – fortunately, I'm seeing that good cooperation to see this team run."

It's unclear where the disconnect grew between Everett's leadership and the "Right of Way Safety Initiative."

The Mayor's Office has not made Mayor Franklin available to answer direct questions.

Her communications manager said they had heard that 50 people were being housed in area motels, but admitted they didn't know where the people were coming from – or going to.

According to the Mayor's Office, they're requesting a seat at the table to address the homelessness crisis – noting they want to ensure safeguards are in place to support individuals while ensuring neighborhoods and businesses aren't impacted either.

WSDOT appears to have taken issue with the claim that they were never in the loop, stating that in addition to the city's homeless coordinator being involved with the recent work – the letter indicates that Everett's deputy mayor was urged to apply for funding so they could directly be involved with the work. They declined.

Details of where the current work is unfolding hasn't been publicized, though it appears more work will be on the horizon.

In 2021, the state released a map detailing homeless encampments along WSDOT property throughout the state. The map, now dated, listed 251 encampments in Snohomish County alone.

A map released by the state depicting how many homeless encampments have been found on WSDOT property in various counties.

	<p>It's unclear how many camps exist at this point in time, though those living on the street tell FOX 13: they hope the work continues.</p> <p>"If you could provide aid and shelter, you know, with buildings that aren't being used it seems like a win-win situation," said Joey Nygaard – a homeless man living near I-5.</p> <p>Nygaard said it feels as if being homeless has been criminalized in Snohomish County – noting while he's committed crimes and landed in prison before, he's found himself in-and-out of jail for things like trespassing and loitering.</p> <p>"I feel like I'm a late bloomer, but I'm maturing a little bit," he said. "I want to be a productive member of society, but it's kind of hard to do down here in the sticker bushes."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Kenya secret railway contract with China
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/08/world/africa/kenya-china-railway-contract.html
GIST	<p>Kenya's government has disclosed some details of the loan agreement the country signed in 2014 with China to build a railway, a major step toward political accountability but one that could strain relations with Beijing, the country's top financier of infrastructure projects.</p> <p>President William Ruto's administration on Sunday published three documents from a contract used to construct a passenger and freight railway that was funded, designed and built by China. It starts from Kenya's coastal region but ends in the middle of nowhere.</p> <p>Since the \$4.7 billion project, known as the Standard Gauge Railway, began five years ago, it has cast a long shadow over the East African nation. It was over budget by millions of dollars and became the center of multiple criminal investigations, saddling the economy with ever-growing debt and ending with judges declaring it illegal because it contravened the country's procurement laws.</p> <p>Experts on China and Africa said the revelations were unprecedented, given that Chinese loan contracts are often shrouded in secrecy.</p> <p>"It is a significant gesture toward transparency," said Cobus van Staden, managing editor of The China Global South Project, a nonprofit researching China's engagement with Africa.</p> <p>The three documents revealed how the railway's financier, Exim Bank of China, had the upper hand in the negotiations. China is Kenya's top trading partner, and the African country owes more bilateral debt to China than to any other nation.</p> <p>The contract stipulated that any goods bought using proceeds from the railway would preferably be sourced from China. Any dispute that emerged from the agreement, the documents said, must be resolved through binding arbitration in China. The contract also could not be disclosed to any third parties without the financier's consent, a move that, now completed, could strain relations between the two countries.</p> <p>It wasn't immediately clear if the Kenyan authorities had consulted Beijing before releasing the documents, and China's foreign ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.</p> <p>The documents also showed that the loan's terms were costlier than expected, said Tony Watima, a Nairobi-based economist. The loan's interest rate was higher than what is typically found in a deal between two governments, he said.</p> <p>The agreement also stipulated that if Kenya defaulted on any other external loan, the default clause on the railway clone would automatically kick in, forcing Kenya to repay the loan and all accrued interest immediately and giving China the right to cease further disbursements.</p>

“Despite it being negotiated as a government-to-government project where one expects a symbiotic relationship, all the risks were taken by the Kenyan taxpayer,” Mr. Watima said. “Whether the project pays for itself or defaults, the financiers are guaranteed their return.”

The deal was signed by the government of President Uhuru Kenyatta; Mr. Ruto was vice president at the time and part of the administration that launched and vigorously defended the project. But troubles with the railway mounted, and China balked at financing the last section, which would have been a link to neighboring Uganda.

To make the railway profitable, the Kenyan authorities issued a directive that all incoming cargo at the Mombasa port be transported by train — a move that led to huge protests, multiple court cases and growing unemployment. In the lead-up to the August elections, Mr. Ruto vowed to revisit the project. When he was inaugurated in September, he reversed the directive in a bid to restore thousands of jobs, particularly in Mombasa.

On Sunday, Kipchumba Murkomen, the cabinet secretary for transport, announced on Twitter that he was releasing the agreement as part of the new administration’s campaign promises.

But observers said on Monday that Mr. Ruto’s government should publish the full contract in order to allow activists and the public to scrutinize the agreement. That would reveal what the authorities offered as a guarantee to get the loan, and may reveal whether the deal was padded by Kenyan officials and Chinese contractors, said Mr. van Staden, of The China Global South Project.

If they did release the full details “it would probably add pressure to renegotiate the loan,” he added. “For incoming governments facing loans taken on by their predecessors, this could be an interesting precedent.”

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HEADLINE	11/08 Ukraine life worsens in occupied areas
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/08/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-kherson-zaporizhzhia.html
GIST	<p>SOUTHERN UKRAINE — Some fled on foot, clambering across a destroyed bridge as fighting engulfed their village. Others traveled out in convoys of cars through Russian military checkpoints. What these families left behind, they said in interviews on their journey in search of safety, was escalating danger and hardship in the Russian-occupied region of Kherson and surrounding areas, where a pivotal confrontation of the war is looming.</p> <p>The tension was visible in the strained faces of the passengers when half a dozen cars pulled up in the late afternoon at a checkpoint near the Ukrainian-held city of Zaporizhzhia last week. “Glory to Ukraine,” cried one woman, hugging a soldier. “I saw the Ukrainian flag and I began to weep,” said another woman, Anna. Her 7-year-old son stared silently from the car window.</p> <p>With Russia tightening border controls, the number of families leaving Russian-occupied territory in southern Ukraine and crossing into a Ukrainian-controlled area has dwindled to a trickle — around 20 a day on average, down from 100 or so earlier in the year.</p> <p>Some of those who made it through last week were bringing passengers in need of medical care, but most were families who said they were just at their wits’ end, as Ukrainian forces pressed their counteroffensive and Russian soldiers commandeered civilian homes to escape deadly accurate bombardment.</p> <p>“We had no more strength,” said one man, Vadym, screwing up his face to stop himself from weeping. He had traveled out with his wife and mother-in-law from the town of Vasylivka, just across the front line, with a few belongings in plastic bags and their ginger tomcat in a pet basket.</p> <p>They left because there was no heat, gas, telephone service or internet, said his wife, Iryna. The last straw was when Russian troops began to occupy the apartment complex where her mother lived.</p>

“She was the only resident left in the five-story apartment building and they started moving in,” Iryna said. Like almost everyone fleeing the war zone they asked their surnames not be published for their security.

Another group of families said they had decided to leave their village of Chervonoblahodatne, on the eastern side of the Kherson region, when Chechen members of the Russian National Guard had occupied it a week earlier.

“They moved into empty houses,” said Lyudmyla, 40. The troops set up checkpoints and began searching residents, and shooting and shelling began, she said. “You could not go out because of the shooting.”

Russian troops have increasingly sought shelter in residential areas and private homes across the region as well as in the embattled city of Kherson as Ukrainian forces have targeted the schools and administrative buildings they had used as bases. Many of those fleeing complained that Russian troops used civilians as cover from Ukrainian fire, or even were carrying out the shelling themselves on villages and then blaming it on the Ukrainian army.

A few even said they welcomed the increasingly intense bombardment of Russian positions by the Ukrainian forces.

Amid the confusion and conflicting information, most said their sense was that under pressure from the Ukrainians, Russian troops were on the retreat in the Kherson region, territory Russia has occupied since the spring.

“They are not just leaving, they are running away,” Vladimir, 38, a builder from Kherson city, said with a grin.

In the city itself, the Russian authorities have evacuated all members of the police force and national guard, as well as people who worked with the Russian administration, he said.

“They are taking all the equipment from hospitals and emergency services,” he said. “I was driving home near the pedagogical institute and I saw soldiers taking out documents. What they need those for, I don’t know.”

But Russian military forces have remained in the city for now, Vladimir, the Ukrainian builder, said, and there was little sign of heavier armored vehicles and tanks leaving because the main bridge crossings over the Dnipro were compromised and frequently under fire. As soon as columns of armor tried to cross they would be hit, he said. “I think they will stay,” he added.

Russian officials, including President Vladimir V. Putin on Saturday, have also urged civilians to flee western Kherson ahead of expected heavy fighting. Most of those leaving have links to the Russian-installed administration and are moving to territory on the eastern bank of the Dnipro River that is more firmly under Russian occupation.

Vladimir described increasingly devastating Ukrainian strikes on buildings used as Russian bases.

“What makes you happy is that our guys are hitting very precisely on Russian troop positions,” he said. “They are striking very accurately.”

In September, as the pro-Moscow authorities pushed through a referendum on annexation and the Ukrainians began their counteroffensive, the atmosphere became more oppressive, one former resident of Kherson city said.

“They started tightening the screws,” said Yevhen, 29, an activist who left the city in late September. He had been detained by Russian troops and badly beaten in May, accused of working first as a spotter for the Ukrainian military and then as an informant for Ukrainian intelligence.

“If you give them a wrong answer, you receive at least a couple of blows, or five or six men start smashing you,” he said in a telephone interview from western Ukraine, where he is now living. “I was sitting on a small stool, with a bag on my head. All my back, ribs, head were blue.”

Yevhen was forced to participate in a propaganda video before being released, but he continued living in Kherson, working as a volunteer, distributing smuggled medicine to those in need.

But in September, soldiers visited his home and questioned him again several times. “They started to search more actively and detain people with a pro-Ukrainian position, activists and former military,” he said. “I was afraid that one day they might take me away again.”

To reach Ukrainian-controlled territory Yevhen and his wife had to apply for passes to cross the Dnipro River and travel to the only border crossing near Zaporizhzhia. They waited in line for two days to cross, he said, because only one ferry was operating and the military was evacuating armored vehicles, trucks, ammunition and soldiers to the eastern bank. Only a few civilian vehicles were allowed to cross with them, possibly to provide cover, he said.

As they were waiting for the ferry, Yevhen said, Ukrainian missiles struck two public buildings being used by the Russian military in the city. A while later, five or six buses filled with wounded soldiers drove on to the ferry in front of them.

The punishing strikes on the Russian military and the steady evacuation of the Russian administration has led to a shift in the mood in Kherson city, Vladimir said. “People cannot wait for the Ukrainians to come.”

In the stores, the sales staff rejected payment in Russian rubles with an expletive, he said. “They are already making fun of the Russians openly.”

Vladimir said he left Kherson city several days ago to bring a neighbor who had suffered a stroke and his wife to Zaporizhzhia for medical treatment.

The journey took two days, and Vladimir said Russian soldiers challenged him at every major intersection, regardless of his ailing passenger.

“They did not care that he was sick,” he said. “They were messing with us at every checkpoint. They were saying, ‘You are young, only 38, you will come back with weapons.’”

Vladimir said that while he was enjoying the freedom of life in the city of Zaporizhzhia, he intended to return home to Kherson city as soon as he could, despite the dangers of the war.

“At first I was worried, but not anymore. I’m tired of worrying,” he said. “Here it’s just air-raid sirens, but there it is explosions every day. Here people are panicking about missiles and kamikaze drones, but there it is your whole house shaking.”

But he said he did not want the Ukrainian forces to let up. “Let them fire. It’s my country,” he said. “It’s my country that is being robbed of its territory.”

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HEADLINE	11/07 Ukraine, Russia battle for Kherson
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/07/world/europe/kherson-ukraine-russia-explainer.html
GIST	<p>In the face of a Ukrainian advance, Russian forces are making the occupied city of Kherson increasingly unlivable, in apparent preparation for a major battle there that has been looming for months.</p> <p>Both sides have given great weight to what happens in Kherson, the only regional capital seized by Moscow’s forces in their invasion this year; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia reportedly refused a request from his military to pull back from the city to more defensible positions.</p>

The Russian flag has been taken down from administrative buildings, military checkpoints have been abandoned, most of the population and the [Kremlin-appointed occupation government have fled](#), and essential services have stopped working.

But so far there is no sign of Moscow's military giving up on Kherson, in southern Ukraine, with Ukrainian forces saying that Russia has amassed 40,000 troops there.

Combat is raging to the north and west in the wider Kherson region, and as Ukrainian forces slowly press their offensive toward the city, they say they have reclaimed more than 100 towns and villages in the area west of the Dnipro River.

But recent events have fueled speculation about what is happening and what comes next. A Russian pullback? A pitched battle for control of the battered city? A feigned withdrawal by the Russians to lure the Ukrainians into a trap?

Amid spotty communications, unverified claims by Russian officials and limited information coming from Ukraine's military, here is some of what is known about Kherson and why control of the city matters.

Conditions for civilians are increasingly bleak.

The people remaining in [the largely depopulated region](#) report that Russians are cutting power supplies and drinking water not only to the city of Kherson but also to towns and villages all along the western bank of the Dnipro.

"They are making a desert out of the right bank," said Petro, a 30-year-old who lives in the area and managed to get a message out late Sunday night. Because of concerns about his safety, he communicated on the condition that his family name not be used.

"Today, they blew up the power poles, so we have no light and no water," he added.

While state media in Russia said that Ukrainian shelling had damaged the power lines, Yaroslav Yanushevych, the exiled Ukrainian head of the Kherson regional military administration, blamed Russian troops.

The Russian forces have also placed mines around water towers in Beryslav, Mr. Yanushevych said, referring to a town less than 50 miles from Kherson city and just north of a critical dam near the front lines of the fighting.

Ukrainian officials say that Russians, who have told civilians to evacuate, fear that those left behind could feed intelligence to the advancing Ukrainian forces or sabotage the Russian military. The Kremlin-appointed governor of the region has warned that any civilians still there could be treated as hostile.

Some 250,000 people lived in the city before the war. Ukrainian activists estimate that 30,000 to 60,000 people remain, but it is impossible to know how accurate such guesses are.

Last month, the occupation authorities [ordered the evacuation of civilians](#) from the west side of the river. They sent thousands of them eastward, to territory that is held more firmly by Russia, while blocking routes into Ukrainian-controlled areas. The government installed by Moscow also departed, while [looting the city](#), according to residents and Ukrainian officials.

Some Ukrainian officials and residents say the civilian evacuation was a pretext for forced deportations. Others say it was about clearing space for newly mobilized Russian troops.

Losing Kherson would be a major blow to the Kremlin.

When Russian forces stormed across the Antonivsky Bridge over the Dnipro River in March and [into Kherson city](#), a major port and a former shipbuilding center, it marked their biggest success of the early days of the war. Mr. Putin hoped to use the wider Kherson region as a bridgehead for a drive farther west, to the port city of Odesa, but that effort failed.

If the Russian forces are driven back across the Dnipro, it would represent a deep symbolic and practical blow for the Kremlin, and its ambition to conquer all of southern Ukraine. The city of Kherson and surrounding country are the [only Russian foothold remaining](#) west of the river.

After Russia illegally seized the Crimean peninsula, to the south, Ukraine cut off a canal from the Dnipro that had been Crimea's main fresh water supply. The invasion earlier this year allowed Russia to resume the flow of water, but further setbacks in Kherson could allow the Ukrainians to interrupt it again.

With his refusal so far to retreat, Mr. Putin has signaled the prestige and strategic value he attaches to the region. Last month, his government said it had annexed [the four Ukrainian regions, including Kherson](#) — though his troops did not control the entirety of any of them — in a move that was widely denounced as illegal.

Ukraine has isolated Russian forces in Kherson.

Since late summer, Ukrainian forces armed with long-range Western artillery have waged a determined campaign to isolate Russian forces west of the river, bombarding the bridges that Moscow used to resupply and reinforce them. At the same time, Ukrainian troops have made a grueling advance on Russian positions.

Russians have relied on pontoon bridges and boats, which have also been shelled. The only remaining river crossing they hold is the Kakhovka dam, more than 30 miles northeast of the city, which has become a major supply route.

Each side has accused the other of planning to sabotage the dam, which could have catastrophic consequences. Much of the terrain downstream, including parts of the city of Kherson, could be flooded. And it could cause a drop in the level of the reservoir behind the dam — the source of critical cooling water for the [Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant](#), Europe's largest.

The Kherson region's wide-open fields, crisscrossed by irrigation canals that make for excellent defensive positions, have slowed the Ukrainian approach, and the arrival of fall has turned much of the ground to mud. Analysts say that Russia has dispatched some of its most seasoned fighters to the region and stockpiled ammunition and other supplies there.

Both sides have signaled a brutal urban battle for Kherson.

Ukraine's military says that, despite the withdrawal of checkpoints, there is no evidence of a withdrawal of Russian forces. Both sides have issued public statements signaling a battle ahead.

If Moscow chooses to defend the city, military experts say it could be a bloody, street-by-street battle. Ukrainian forces are still far from the city limits, reportedly facing stiff resistance.

A pro-Russian proxy leader in Kherson said over the weekend that Ukraine was massing artillery, planes and helicopters in preparation for the next stage of its assault on the region. Top officials in Kyiv have said that Moscow might be trying to create the illusion that its forces are leaving Kherson to draw Ukrainians into a fight.

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HEADLINE	11/07 World leaders meet on climate crisis
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/07/climate/climate-change-crisis-cop27.html

SHARM EL SHEIKH — World leaders gathered Monday to wrestle with the crisis of climate change, amid a sea of other pressing challenges that threaten to set back already inadequate steps to pivot the global economy away from fossil fuels.

Casting an ominous shadow over these talks is Russia's invasion of Ukraine, itself financed by the sale of Russian gas. The conflict has unsettled the global energy market, spurred inflation and led some to call for more oil and gas drilling. Meanwhile, poor countries suffering from climate effects are increasingly frustrated with wealthy countries whose emissions are driving global warming. And relations between the two biggest polluters, the United States and China, have fallen to a new low.

"We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator," the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, told the gathering of more than 100 princes, presidents, and prime ministers Monday at the summit, the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations climate convention, known as [COP27](#).

Scattered amid the sprawling conference center were several pavilions dedicated to the promotion of oil and gas. Saudi Arabia had paid for an exceptionally large space to describe itself as an energy hub. OPEC had a space showing off what it called its international development fund. Mauritania boasted of its natural gas reserves.

As the countries of Europe scramble to get off Russian natural gas, rising gas prices are whetting the appetites for new gas production elsewhere, from the North Sea to the Gulf of Mexico to the West African coast. Prince bin Zayed of the United Arab Emirates said flatly that his country would continue to produce gas so long as there was a market for it. He called his country a "responsible" gas producer.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of Britain, who reversed his earlier decision to skip the summit, told delegates that the Russian invasion of Ukraine should prompt developed countries to invest more heavily in renewable energy.

"Putin's abhorrent war in Ukraine, and rising energy prices across the world are not a reason to go slow on climate change," Mr. Sunak said. "They are a reason to act faster."

Mr. Guterres underscored that climate change was not a separate issue that could be deferred, but is linked with the crises of war, unrest and hunger. "It is the central challenge of our century," he said. "It is unacceptable, outrageous and self-defeating to put it on the back burner. Indeed, many of today's conflicts are linked with growing climate chaos."

Mr. Guterres urged the United States and China to resume discussions on ways to cooperate on climate action, saying that the nations had "a particular responsibility to join efforts."

There is no immediate sign of thaw. The Chinese president, Xi Jinping, is not attending the meeting. Mr. Xi's single-minded focus on shoring up his country's sagging economy — and his increasingly closer relationship to Russia's Vladimir Putin — has raised doubts about his commitment to greening the Chinese economy, while Tuesday's midterm elections in the United States have brought new uncertainties about the future direction of American climate policy.

John Kerry, President Biden's climate envoy, is trying to reboot discussions at the conference with his Chinese counterpart, Xie Zhenhua, but so far, the two have no scheduled meetings. President Biden is scheduled to appear at the meeting on Friday, after other world leaders have departed.

Of the 110 national leaders who appeared at the global event on Monday, seven were women. One of them, Mia Mottley, prime minister of Barbados, gave an impassioned call for reform of the international banking system, saying it trapped formerly colonized countries into deepening debt, as they try to cope with climate hazards.

Leah Namugerwa, an 18-year-old climate activist from Uganda, told the dignitaries, most of whom were middle-aged or older, to move faster. “Politicians, when you stand up to talk, my generation asks that you speak like we are in an emergency,” she said.

The biggest fault line at these talks is over the contentious issue of [who pays for climate damages](#) that wreak havoc on countries that have done the least to cause global warming. Several blocs of developing countries have been pushing for payment from rich, industrialized countries, which have been wary of being held liable for what could be trillions of dollars. On this, there was a small breakthrough Sunday. For the first time, the issue of funding for loss and damage is on the official agenda.

But as part of a compromise, negotiators said the discussion would focus on “cooperation and facilitation” not “liability or compensation.”

Now comes the hard part: hammering out the details of what kind of funding arrangement and how much. That will be the subject of negotiations over the remainder of the conference, which is scheduled to end Nov. 18.

The conference opened Sunday in this resort city of sand and sea with a grim, though not unexpected scientific assessment. The years since the creation of the Paris Agreement in 2015 have been the hottest on record, because of rising emissions of planet warming gases, the World Meteorological Organization reported.

The Paris Agreement’s goal of slowing down global temperature rise has worked, but not at the pace and scale necessary. Before the accord, the average global temperature was set to rise by 4 degrees Celsius by 2100, compared with the start of the industrial age. It is now set to rise by 2.1 to 2.9 degrees Celsius. That’s far higher than 1.5 degree Celsius, which is the threshold beyond which scientists say the likelihood significantly increases of climate catastrophe.

Average global temperatures have already risen by about 1.1 degrees Celsius compared with preindustrial levels. Already, that has exacerbated extreme weather worldwide. This year alone, extraordinary heat scorched the Northern Hemisphere and caused severe drought in China while catastrophic flooding destroyed property and lives in Nigeria and Pakistan.

“If the political leaders mean what they say they must act in a new way,” Johan Rockstrom, head of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research, said Monday evening. “To live up to their words, policymakers must immediately cut fossil fuel use within their own countries.”

Protests are usually a mainstay of these annual U.N. climate talks, an opportunity for activists and nongovernment groups to raise their voices to decision makers. But not this year. This meeting is being held in a convention center heavily patrolled by the Egyptian military, with unusually tight security restrictions that essentially shut down any display of dissent.

The Egyptian government said it would allow some protests and set up a designated zone for activists but it was far from the actual conference and difficult to reach. Monday afternoon, there was [no one there save a few Russian tourists](#) and some reporters.

The country’s most well-known political prisoner, [Alaa Abd El Fattah](#), who has been in jail for most of the last nine years over his criticism of the country’s authoritarian government, stepped up his hunger strike on Sunday as the conference began, and began refusing water.

“Unfortunately, the only way I can actually sum up the COP27 summit so far is using two words: poor start,” Mohamed Adow, the director of Power Shift Africa, a group that aims to mobilize climate action across the continent, said at a news conference. “We cannot have COP27 become a sham.”

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SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/07/world/middleeast/american-aid-worker-baghdad.html
GIST	<p>An American aid worker was shot dead on Monday while driving a car in Baghdad, Iraqi officials said, in a rare attack on a foreigner in the Iraqi capital.</p> <p>A senior Iraqi intelligence official said the American was killed in the evening in the central Karrada area of Baghdad, where he and his family rented a house. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the public, said the aid worker's car had been shot by gunmen traveling in two vehicles.</p> <p>Security officials said that they did not know the motive behind the attack.</p> <p>The intelligence official said the American had been employed by Millennium Relief and Development Services, a U.S.-based charity that says it was established in 1998 to provide long-term development assistance to the poor in more than 40 countries.</p> <p>A spokesman said the U.S. Embassy could not yet confirm the death but was investigating. The New York Times is withholding the victim's name pending confirmation that his extended family has been notified.</p> <p>The killings and kidnappings of foreigners for ransom were more common during Iraq's civil war, when Al Qaeda and Shiite militias fought in the streets after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. But in recent years, Baghdad has become relatively safe, with many foreign residents living in homes and apartments in the heart of the capital. When killings occur, the attacks are usually an outgrowth of militia disputes or criminal activity.</p> <p>The aid worker was affiliated with an American English-language center in Baghdad, and posted recent videos on the center's Facebook page inviting Iraqi students to sign up.</p> <p>His social media feeds included Bible quotations and photos from the family's travels in Baghdad and Jordan. One showed him and his wife taking a selfie on Al Mutanabi Street, the cultural heart of Baghdad, and another posing at sunset on a bridge over the Tigris River with the caption: "What a wonderful place!"</p> <p>On his Facebook page, a family photo showed him and his young children in the United States setting off to deliver food aid.</p> <p>"A ship in harbor is safe, but that's not what ships are built for," one of his Twitter messages read, quoting the writer John A. Shedd.</p> <p>Iraq has been in intense political turmoil over a new government, which was sworn in last month after more than a year of political deadlock following 2021 elections. The new government is dominated by political blocs tied to Iran-backed militias. Clashes this year between those militias and fighters loyal to a Shiite cleric who rejects Iranian and other foreign interference have raised fears that inter-Shiite fighting could undermine the country's relative security stability.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 City manager fires Sunnyside police chief
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/city-manager-fires-sunnyside-police-chief-replaces-commander-on-leave-pending-investigation/
GIST	<p>Sunnyside, Yakima County, police Chief Albert Escalera has been fired, and a commander on the force has been placed on leave pending an internal investigation, City Manager Elizabeth Alba said in a Monday news release.</p> <p>Alba cited increasing crime, officer-involved shootings and reports of misconduct from within the department as reasons for firing Escalera, who served as chief for the past eight years.</p>

	<p>“I have not come to this decision lightly, but ultimately believe my decision best serves the interests of the police department, the city as a whole, and the community of Sunnyside,” Alba wrote.</p> <p>Alba said trust and cohesion between herself and the police chief were lacking.</p> <p>“I have therefore concluded that both the city and the community will benefit from a change in leadership as we look to the future,” she wrote.</p> <p>Escalera could not immediately be reached for comment.</p> <p>Police Sgt. Robert Laymen has been appointed interim chief until a permanent replacement is found, the release said. Meanwhile, Cmdr. Scott Bailey has been placed on administrative leave pending an investigation into alleged misconduct.</p> <p>Alba said Bailey’s leave is not disciplinary in nature and should not be construed as any adverse findings against him at this time.</p> <p>Sgt. Johnnie Gusby has been appointed to serve as interim commander until the investigation is complete, the release said.</p> <p>Alba said in the release that the city would not comment further about these developments at this time.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Seattle-area homes linger on the market
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/seattle-area-homes-linger-on-the-market-as-higher-rates-hit-buyers-power/
GIST	<p>Seattle home sellers are waiting longer to find a willing buyer despite lower prices, signaling a dramatic shift from the bidding wars of just six months ago.</p> <p>Rising interest rates, meant to slow inflation, are making life harder for homebuyers, leaving many of them on the sidelines as their buying power shrinks. In turn, would-be sellers are holding off on listing their homes. The result: Across the Puget Sound region, fewer new listings hit the market in October than a year ago, and more homes were still lingering on the market at the end of the month, according to data released Monday by the Northwest Multiple Listing Service.</p> <p>Look no further than Snohomish County, where there were three times as many homes still for sale at the end of October than at the same time last year.</p> <p>King County saw 38% fewer pending single-family home sales in October than last year, and 34% fewer than at the same time in 2019, before the pandemic supercharged the market. Nationwide, applications for loans to buy homes are dropping.</p> <p>The slowdown began this summer. By September, the median Seattle house took 17 days to sell, up nine days from the same time a year earlier, according to Redfin. In Bellevue, homes spent about 24 days on the market, 18 days longer than last year, and in Tacoma, homes spent 23 days on the market, 16 longer than last year.</p> <p>Slower price growth</p> <p>All those factors have put the brakes on runaway price growth across Western Washington.</p> <p>Compared to the market’s peak in May, October median home prices were down 10% each in King and Snohomish counties, 8% in Pierce County and 7% in Kitsap County, according to Northwest Multiple Listing Service data.</p>

The median single-family home sold for \$903,000 in King County, \$730,000 in Snohomish County, \$535,000 in Pierce County and \$513,250 in Kitsap County.

Prices are still up compared to a year ago, but the price jumps are smaller than they were during the market peak. King County single-family home prices are up about 10%, while other nearby counties are up between 1% and 5%.

If the trends continue, prices could end up flat year over year or start to drop from last year's levels.

Zillow senior economist Nicole Bachaud predicts Seattle-area prices will stay flat between now and next fall. That's in part because the huge price hikes in 2020 and 2021 were "completely unsustainable," Bachaud said.

"We can't have 20% growth every year, and the reason why is because of affordability," Bachaud said. "Incomes have grown, but they have not grown nearly as much as home values did. So, there's not going to be anybody left to buy homes at a certain point."

That turnaround has already arrived in Whatcom County, where a [flood of remote workers](#) helped drive up prices earlier in the pandemic. The median home price of \$565,000 last month was the same last October, although it was 35% higher from 2019.

As homes linger longer, listing agents are looking to make their offerings more attractive. Sellers are lowering their prices and offering to cover closing costs, said Windermere agent Michael Doyle. Even with incentives, some houses are sitting unsold.

Facing that dynamic, "we definitely have a lot of sellers who are reluctant to get in," Doyle said. Not only do they worry their home might not sell, but they're hesitant to "give up the cheap money that they borrowed for that house" and deal with higher interest rates, he said.

Poulsbo broker Frank Wilson had advice for potential sellers looking to price their home right. "What your neighbor's house sold for six months ago has very little bearing on your home's value today," Wilson, a John L. Scott broker, said in a statement.

As sellers get more eager, buyers are gaining leverage, but they continue to take hits to their budgets.

Nationally, it now takes about 39% of median household income to cover the monthly payment on an average home, the highest share since 1984, according to Black Knight, a mortgage data company. In Seattle, it took 50% of median income as of September.

The monthly payment for a typical home in the Seattle metro area is now more than \$4,000 a month, 71.5% higher than a year ago, according to Zillow.

"That's putting a lot of households in a position where there's no way they can afford a mortgage. You cannot apply and get qualified," Bachaud said. "So we're going to see demand pulling way back as a result."

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HEADLINE	11/07 Is it the flu, a cold or Covid symptoms?
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/do-you-have-the-flu-a-cold-or-covid-heres-how-to-spot-the-differences/
GIST	<p>The season of sniffles and shivers is underway.</p> <p>As temperatures dip into the 30s and 40s and boxes of tissue become common household items again, doctors and health experts are worried many Washingtonians may have forgotten our immune systems are likely underprepared.</p>

“Even though we’ve seen a lighter flu season in the past couple of years because of all the masking and distancing that were related to COVID, we anticipate this is going to be a particularly bad year based on predictions from Australia and the Southern Hemisphere,” said Dr. Elizabeth Meade, a pediatric hospitalist and medical director of education, outreach and quality at Providence Swedish.

State COVID trends were still relatively low around the end of October, though cases of RSV, a virus that can cause coldlike symptoms, [have been skyrocketing for weeks](#), filling pediatric hospitals. Because RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, infections are pouring into the region months earlier than usual, they’re beginning to overlap with the beginning of influenza season.

The state’s rate of flu infections has also [begun to increase](#) in the past few weeks. At least three Washingtonians have died from the flu since the beginning of October.

In [King County](#), about 5.4% of lab tests are returning positive for influenza, compared to about 0.7% in mid-October.

This week, Meade answered our top questions about these respiratory infections and how to stay safe. This conversation has been edited for clarity and brevity.

How can I tell the difference between flu, RSV and COVID symptoms?

Many of those symptoms overlap, unfortunately, so it can be really difficult for people to tell what’s what without testing. Some things are more specific — if someone has the acute loss of taste or smell, then that would be very suspicious for COVID.

If you have COVID, you can also have lots of nonspecific symptoms, like aches, congestion, cough, sore throat. Those are things that tend to overlap with the other viruses.

Flu is one of those illnesses like COVID where people tend to feel like they got hit by a truck — feeling really exhausted, really sore, really achey and with a high fever. It’s sort of the all-encompassing one here. With the exception of loss of taste or smell, many of the symptoms of flu will overlap with all of these other illnesses.

RSV is not something that typically comes with high fevers, but can cause fevers in children. It often tends to cause sneezing and lots of congestion. In older children and adults, RSV typically looks like a common cold. In younger children with underlying health conditions or older people with underlying health conditions, we tend to see more of the lower respiratory symptoms, like difficulty breathing, fast breathing or use of different muscles (like retractions in between ribs or flaring of the nostrils).

In really young children, it can cause inability to feed, severe respiratory distress and color change (like turning blue or pale).

There’s really no way to differentiate between RSV and other cold viruses without a test.

If I think I have one of these illnesses, at what point should I seek medical attention?

A lot depends on the person. If you’re not someone who’s at high risk of developing severe disease — if you’re an older child or adolescent, or a relatively young adult or middle-aged person who doesn’t have underlying health conditions — then unless you’re experiencing severe symptoms (difficulty breathing, dehydration, confusion, changing color, chest pain), we’d suggest you try to do some self-care at home or have a phone call or virtual visit with your physician.

For those in high-risk groups, it’s best to call a doctor or health professional to see if you need to be evaluated. Those more vulnerable to developing severe respiratory symptoms include children under the age of 5 for some things like flu; children under the age of 2 for other things like RSV or COVID; anyone with underlying health conditions, specifically heart or lung disease; people over 65; or anyone who has a

decreased immune system (like those on immune-suppressing medications, those who have had transplants or those who are pregnant).

If you're having severe symptoms, then you really do need to see a provider, whether that's [your own, or going to urgent care or the emergency room](#).

What does self-care at home look like if my symptoms aren't too severe?

For cold and RSV, make sure you're able to breathe comfortably and that you're able to stay hydrated. Suctioning (getting mucus out from your nose) and using medications to control fever are also recommended for most kids and adults. (Note: Tylenol and ibuprofen are good options, though babies under 6 months old shouldn't take ibuprofen.)

Typical over-the-counter cold and cough medications are [not recommended for young children](#), and parents and caretakers should instead opt for fluids and fever-reducers.

Honey can also be useful for adults and older kids for soothing sore throats or coughing, but children under 1 years old shouldn't have honey.

For flu, it's all about supportive care as well, but there are antiviral medications we will use at times, typically for higher risk patients (young children, pregnant people, people with underlying health conditions). Tamiflu, for example, is an option that's most useful if given within the first 48 hours of illness.

What if I'm infected with multiple viruses at once?

It's not that the viruses are merging or even that they're interacting with each other, but it's more that having more than one illness that can cause similar symptoms at the same time can certainly cause more severe symptoms and give people a more significant risk of severe illness, hospitalization, ICU care and death. What we particularly worry about is really nasty viruses like the flu in combination with something like COVID. That could be very dangerous for people of any age or underlying health status.

This year, as we're seeing this giant surge of RSV, and frankly many other viruses, we're starting to see flu-positive patients in Washington state. And we always anticipate there will be a likely COVID surge with holidays and travel and all that, so I think this is shaping up to be potentially a very difficult winter when it comes to respiratory diseases.

How do I test for these viruses?

COVID tests remain fairly accessible to most Washingtonians, who can either pick one up at a pharmacy or drug store or order free kits from the [state's home testing program](#).

There's no home testing options for the flu or most other cold viruses, but most hospitals and clinics have access to both rapid tests and more sensitive tests, which test for several different viruses and take a little longer to return results.

What are your top recommendations for avoiding these viruses?

If you have any respiratory symptoms, stay home from day care, work or school. Lots of hand washing. Wearing masks when appropriate — in school for some people, in large gatherings, etc. Avoid anyone else who has respiratory symptoms. And stay up-to-date on routine vaccines, including [flu and COVID shots](#).

We know RSV is highly contagious and we know kids spread it very easily. So this is a time for parents to be really vigilant about not sending your child to day care or school if they have any cold symptoms. There's no way for most people to know if that's RSV or not, and while the other children that are around your child may not be at high risk, they may have young siblings, newborns or other immunocompromised people at home.

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SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article268284602.html
GIST	<p>More than 1,850 people are homeless in Pierce County, and Tacoma wants to reach “functional zero” with its homelessness response by supporting permanent housing and providing supportive services for those who are homeless.</p> <p>The City of Tacoma’s Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness, which was released this week, outlines five goals to create immediate access to shelter and for those who are experiencing homelessness to access shelter, services and a pathway toward stable permanent housing.</p> <p>“We recognize that homelessness is a complex situation and as such we want to make sure that we are able to fund traditional approaches to addressing homelessness and be ready to work on innovative options to meeting people where they are in their journey,” said Caleb Carbone, City of Tacoma Homeless Strategy, Systems and Services Manager. “This plan represents a lot of work that is ongoing by both the City and our amazing community partners who are providing direct services daily.”</p> <p>The city has proposed \$34 million in homeless services in its 2023-2024 biennial budget. Almost \$16 million is one-time resources that will allow for the stand-up of expanded permanent shelter and more temporary and emergency shelters.</p> <p>According to the Pierce County Homeless Point-In-Time Count, between 2017 to 2022, homelessness in the county increased by 40 percent with 1,851 people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>This year, there are 1,225 shelter beds and 137 permanent housing units. For 2023-2024, there will be 1,375 shelter beds, 137 permanent supportive housing units and 120 affordable housing units. At the end of that biennium, one-time funding ends, and the city will transition out of temporary and empty shelter to more sustainable housing. For 2025-2026, there will be 748 shelter beds, 281 permanent supportive housing units and 241 affordable housing units, with 427 units of unfunded shelter needed. For 2027-2028, the support shelter and housing capacity remains the same, and the need for unfunded shelter decreases to 145 units.</p> <p>The current projected funding gap is approximately \$6.25 million a year starting in 2025.</p> <p>“Homelessness remains a central issue across Tacoma as the conditions that contribute to homelessness have continued to worsen due to the housing affordability crisis and the two pandemics of this time period, COVID-19 and racism,” the homelessness strategy stated.</p> <p>The strategy aligns with Pierce County’s Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness, which was ratified in March, to increase shelter capacity and services across the system to relieve the heavily weighted shelter capacity in the city and shift efforts to increase affordable housing. The report outlines action items that coordinates with the county’s plan.</p> <p>The City of Tacoma’s Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure affordable housing is available and accessible to Tacoma residents 2. Everyone experiencing homelessness in Tacoma or impacted by homelessness can access services and support. 3. A shelter system in Tacoma that offers residents an easily-accessible, safe and dignified experience. 4. Tacoma’s homeless service system provides individuals and families with access to a continuum of tailored supports to prevent and end homelessness. 5. Tacoma’s homeless service system provides individuals and families with access to permanent, stable housing in order to end the cycle of homelessness.
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HEADLINE	11/07 Nearly 20,000 still no power after storm
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/weather/power-outages-us-2-closed-western-washington-storm/281-7cb753fb-aec2-4199-bc5c-f0b1b322e9f3

SEATTLE — Tens of thousands remain without power days after a series of weather events brought heavy rain and strong winds to western Washington, according to KING 5's First Alert Weather Team. Friday night's gusty winds knocked several western Washington communities out of power and closed several roadways due to downed trees or power lines.

Utility crews have been working around the clock, some nearly 24 hours straight to restore power. Crews from other parts of the state and Oregon are out to help local crews, which continue to work throughout the night.

Snohomish County Public Utilities District said this is the worst storm it's seen since 2015, with downed powerlines, trees, and limbs in every part of the county.

Rodney Peterson lives in Marysville, and has been worried about trees behind his home since he moved in. Peterson said he and his wife heard a loud boom Friday night, and saw the tree fell on his home.

Peterson also saw a tree fall on his neighbor's house all the way to the first floor, and immediately ran to help.

"There was a young lady sleeping on the second floor of the house and there was now she's on the bottom floor with a tree on top of her. That was traumatic to see," said Peterson.

Peterson helped to clear debris and free the 20-year-old woman before Marysville Fire and Police arrived, rendering CPR and taking her to the hospital. The woman remains in critical condition.

"The whole family was there and they were distraught trying to free her so I jumped in and tried to help as much as I could," Peterson said.

In a 10-hour period during the peak and aftermath of Friday's severe weather, Marysville Firefighters received 80 emergency calls. The department typically receives 40 in a 24-hour span.

Neighbors of Peterson's street said trees fell on at least nine homes.

As crews work around the clock, people are worried about the cold nights ahead.

"We recommend that you use a small room in your house. Get your family, your pets all in to get that body heat to warm up that room and bundle up," said Kellie Stickney, spokesperson for Snohomish PUD.

Rob and Janet Lowe also had a tree fall and damage a home they own, but said everyone on the street is coming together to help.

"It was pretty crazy but everyone seems to come together. People were making soup feeding everybody out there," said Janet Lowe.

Snohomish PUD is asking people to be patient and to avoid downed trees and power lines. It said it could be days for some people in the county before power is restored.

Power Outages

As of 10 p.m. Monday, [Snohomish County Public Utilities District](#) lists 19,927 customers without power, [Puget Sound Energy](#) reports 85 without power, [Jefferson](#) County Public Utilities District reports 2,640 without power and [Seattle City Light](#) is fully restored.

Overnight Friday into Saturday, more than 200,000 customers were without power across western Washington.

Some people who live on Camano Island have been without power since 9 p.m. on Friday and it's possible it won't come back on until Thursday.

	<p>The Snohomish County PUD is dealing with scores of downed powerlines and poles. At the storm's peak about 200,000 customers were without power. That's down to less than 30,000 now, but it's slow work. Replacing a power pole can take 12 hours and patience is wearing thin.</p> <p>"It's very frustrating," Camano Island resident Christine Smith said, "especially when we're taking very cold showers and we're in total darkness except for relying on your flashlight. Those cold showers really wake you up in the morning."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Anti-Russia, -Putin group gather in Poland
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/russian-enemies-of-kremlin-meet-in-poland-to-plot-violent-elimination-of-vladimir-putin?ref=home
GIST	<p>Anti-Russia activists and former Russian lawmakers opposed to Russian President Vladimir Putin have been gathering in Poland in recent days to discuss what removing Putin from power would look like nearly nine months into his war in Ukraine.</p> <p>Some of the scenarios the anti-Russia group discussed include Russians staging a civil war, taking up arms, and killing Putin, according to <i>Euractiv</i>.</p> <p>A guerrilla fight may be the only way to take down Putin, said opposition activist Viacheslav Maltsev. "The main goal is to physically eliminate Putin," Maltsev said.</p> <p>"The fight against terrorists requires terrorists' methods," one politician present said, according to Gazeta Wyborcza.</p> <p>Ilya Ponomarev, a former member of the State Duma and the only Russian lawmaker to vote against annexing Crimea in 2014, arranged the gathering, and has said he is organizing an underground resistance movement in recent months. Some have expressed doubts about whether he actually leads a coalition of rebels, while others have questioned if he has become too radical and violent, as The Daily Beast reported. Allies of opposition leader Alexey Navalny did not participate in the gathering, according to <i>Euractiv</i>.</p> <p>Regardless of Ponomarev's claims and tactics, though, the gathering in Poland this weekend is just the latest signal that those opposed to Putin are growing more vocal by the day.</p> <p>The chatter of a Putin ouster comes as he struggles to make gains in his war in Ukraine, with dissent for his war growing in Russia. Ukrainian forces have been gaining momentum since they began mounting counteroffensives against Russian forces in the south and northeast of Ukraine, forcing Russians to retreat. And in a push to replace those lost on the battlefield, Putin announced a "partial mobilization" for eligible Russian men—but instead of responding with support, hundreds of thousands of Russians responded with a massive exodus from the nation to flee conscription.</p> <p>Russian officials in St. Petersburg and Moscow have also called for Putin's ouster in recent months. Elite circles in Russia are also starting to rally behind the idea that Putin needs to leave power, according to a close former aide of Putin's, his speechwriter, Abbas Gallyamov.</p> <p>Although various groups interested in Putin losing power have different ideas about how to go about ensuring his downfall, according to former senior members of the U.S. intelligence community, Putin's ouster very well may be violent and come all of a sudden.</p> <p>"Nobody's gonna ask, 'Hey Vladimir, would you like to leave?' No. It's a fucking hammer to the head and he's dead. Or it's time to go to the sanatorium," Daniel Hoffman, a former CIA Moscow chief of station, told The Daily Beast. "They schwack him for it. That's what they'll do."</p>

Even Putin's closest allies have been criticizing him in recent days in what could be a signal that Putin's hold on power—and his future as a leader—is disintegrating.

[Yevgeniy Prigozhin](#), or “Putin’s chef,” known for his election interference targeting U.S. elections, and for leading the mercenary Wagner Group, has begun pushing a narrative that he is the one man who can win the war in Ukraine. Just last month, Chechen leader [Ramzan Kadyrov](#), another Putin crony, announced on social media he was “very unhappy” with the way the war was progressing, calling Russia’s performance “weak.”

Prigozhin has begun narrating his own thoughts on leadership and how to win the war.

“To become stronger, to win, you need to treat the opponent with respect,” [Prigozhin said](#) early this month, according to Reuters. “Don’t underestimate him. Always look for flaws in yourself, and see what’s good and important that can be learned from the experience of the enemy.”

Some of Russia’s closest partners on the world stage, including China and India, have also sought to distance themselves from Russia in recent weeks. [Chinese President Xi Jinping](#) called on other countries to “reject the threat of nuclear weapons and advocate against a nuclear war to prevent a crisis on the Eurasian continent,” just as Russia has begun hinting that it may resort to nuclear weapons.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who spoke with Xi last week, said they agreed that Russia would cross a line if it used nuclear weapons.

[India’s defense minister](#), Rajnath Singh, noted last week that “the nuclear option should not be resorted to” when Russia’s defense minister, Sergei Shoigu, confronted him with his suspicion that Ukraine might use a dirty bomb and try to frame Russia as the culprit behind it.

The Biden administration and western leaders have denounced Russia’s alleged concerns about Ukraine using a dirty bomb and suggested that Putin himself might be planning to use a dirty bomb or try to frame Ukraine.

[Resistance is building in Belarus](#), a close ally of Russia, as well. Belarus’ opposition leader, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, recently proposed an alliance with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, to better push against Russia’s goals in the war and in Europe, as The Daily Beast reported.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Diverting police w/mobile response units
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/sons-killing-officers-forges-moms-campaign-divert-police/story?id=92625007
GIST	<p>A California mother whose son was shot and killed in 2019 by police during a mental health crisis has partnered with local officials to create a mobile task force to aid those struggling with mental illness.</p> <p>Taun Hall’s son, Miles, began showing signs of possible mental illness during his teenage years. He would later be diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder and, as his symptoms progressed, Hall worried about Miles’ safety.</p> <p>The fears were not unfounded: People with severe, untreated mental illness are 16 times more likely to be killed by police, according to Treatment Advocacy Center, a nonprofit based in Arlington, Va. Hall also worried about Miles as a Black man, which made him three times as likely as white people to be killed by law enforcement, according to a study by researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.</p> <p>Hall reached out to law enforcement in her Walnut Creek neighborhood, a wealthy suburb a few miles from San Francisco, to alert them about her son’s mental health challenges. She also worked with her local mental health officer to open a channel of communication.</p> <p>“I was trying to be preventive,” Hall said. “I was trying to get things handled before there was a problem.”</p>

Miles' condition worsened in 2019; he began experiencing delusions and sometimes referred to himself as "Jesus." But he was 23, legally an adult, and Hall couldn't force him to get help.

"You see your child going down a mental health kind of spiral... you can see the deterioration, but you can't do anything to help him."

When Hall saw Miles' symptoms getting worse, she reached out to the mental health officer she'd been working with to aid Miles. Hall left a message for her, and called the local police department's non-emergency line, trying to alert them to Miles' condition in case her son encountered law enforcement. "I was like, 'OK, if they know him, they're gonna respond with care and compassion.'"

The next day, Miles was gardening with his grandmother. A neighbor loaned Miles a gardening tool, a long metal rod that resembled a crow bar. Miles began walking around with the rod, calling it his "staff from God." He was walking around, saying he was Jesus, when he used the metal rod to break a sliding glass door at the family's home, Hall said.

Miles came into the home and asked Hall and her husband to leave. They did, in an effort to de-escalate the situation, and Hall called 911. Hall told the 911 operator Miles had a metal rod.

About 10 minutes later, a neighbor called to tell Hall that Miles had been shot. According to police reports, officers responded to several calls that afternoon, not just Hall's call.

Miles had been pounding on a neighbor's door and several residents called police. Police footage shows officers calling Miles by his name, shouting at him to "stop" as he approached them, holding the metal rod. Despite their orders, Miles kept moving forward. Then, officers fired a bean-bag round, meant to stop a suspect but not do permanent damage. When that didn't stop Miles, officers shot him several times with their handguns, killing him.

"The worst fricking moment of, you know, our lives was right then, right there."

An internal investigation cleared the officers of wrongdoing.

In the years since her son's death, Hall has worked with Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahan to try to stop other families from experiencing the same tragedy. Hall realized that what would have been helpful to her was having someone to call who wasn't the police. "We needed a different number to call. We needed a different response."

Replacing police with mobile response units to address low-level calls -- like those about mental health -- is happening in many cities around the country. Oakland, California, began testing a pilot program in April. The new task force, called MACRO -- Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland -- was created to provide a first-response option that was separate from the police.

Oakland residents can access the task force by calling 911 and being connected to a special MACRO dispatch center. The task force's interactions with the public come from what they call "on-view" calls. These take place when the team sees someone who may need assistance and offers resources and basic medical attention.

"If someone's in need and you can put your eyes on them, you can stop and help them," said program manager Elliott Jones. "And even if you're just giving them a bottle of water and sitting them up straight, that's maybe more compassion they've gotten and God knows how long."

Each MACRO team has an EMT, a crisis intervention specialist and a minivan packed with supplies. The team doesn't just address low-level mental health concerns. It also helps with homelessness, public intoxication and behavioral issues, among others.

	<p>Hall worked with Bauer-Kahan on a bill to expand funding for mental health services in California and Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the bill at the end of September, locking in an 8-year roadmap to fund mobile crisis units across California.</p> <p>Accessible through the national suicide and crisis line -- 988 -- these services will connect users to crisis intervention specialists, counselors and peer support workers. Hall says that this is the response that could have helped her son.</p> <p>"I can't ever take back a phone call," said Hall, referring to the 911 call she made the day her son was killed. "I can't ever take back the officer shooting him...but I can take my pain to purpose and make sure this doesn't happen to somebody else."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Florida declares state emergency for storm
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/subtropical-storm-nicole-hurricane-nears-florida/story?id=92789211
GIST	<p>A tropical storm and storm surge warnings are now in effect along the east coast of Florida as Subtropical Storm Nicole makes its way toward the state, according to the National Weather Service.</p> <p>The NWS warned Monday that Nicole could be as strong as a hurricane when it approaches Florida's east coast later this week.</p> <p>The storm could impact election week in the Sunshine State, where Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis is running against Democratic rival Charlie Crist and Rep. Val Demings, D-Fla., is trying to unseat Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.</p> <p>DeSantis has declared a state of emergency for 34 counties.</p> <p>"While this storm does not, at this time, appear that it will become much stronger, I urge all Floridians to be prepared," he said in a statement. "We will continue to monitor the trajectory and strength of this storm as it moves towards Florida."</p> <p>Florida Power & Light is urging customers to prepare for power outages and has activated its emergency response plan ahead of Nicole's potential impact on the state this week.</p> <p>"[Hurricane] Ian saturated soil and weakened trees in many parts of the state, so Nicole could cause trees to topple over and other vegetation and debris to blow into overhead power lines and equipment, which may cause outages," Eric Silagy, chairman and CEO of FPL, said in a statement.</p> <p>Nicole formed in the southwestern Atlantic Ocean on Monday, becoming the 14th named storm of the 2022 Atlantic hurricane season, which ends this month. Nicole's center will approach the northwestern Bahamas on Tuesday, move near or over those islands on Wednesday, then approach eastern Florida by Wednesday night, according to the National Weather Service.</p> <p>Currently, Nicole wields maximum sustained winds of about 45 miles per hour, with higher gusts. Winds of 40 mph or greater extend outward up to 275 miles to the east of the storm's center.</p> <p>"Gradual strengthening is forecast during the next few days, and Nicole could be near or at hurricane intensity by Wednesday or Wednesday night while it is moving near the northwestern Bahamas," the National Weather Service said in a public advisory issued Monday morning.</p> <p>A tropical storm watch is now in effect for the northwestern Bahamas.</p> <p>Tropical storm conditions are possible in the northwestern Bahamas by Tuesday night or early Wednesday. A storm surge could raise water levels by as much as 3 to 5 feet above normal tide levels along the coast in areas of onshore winds, according to the National Weather Service.</p>

Nicole is expected to produce between 2 and 4 inches of rainfall across the northwestern Bahamas Tuesday through Thursday, with a maximum of 6 inches for localized rain. The storm is expected to bring "[heavy rainfall](#)" to parts of Florida and the southeastern United States by mid- to late week, the National Weather Service said.

Between 4 and 7 inches of rainfall is possible along the eastern coastline from Florida to the Carolinas. Tropical storm-force winds of 60 to 70 mph are also in the forecast, depending how much Nicole strengthens. The storm could lead to beach erosion, rough surf and rip currents.

Tropical weather systems have the potential to quickly grow into hurricanes, while subtropical ones do not. A subtropical storm typically generates more rain and heavy thunderstorms. If a subtropical storm intensifies enough to have hurricane-force winds, then it has become fully tropical. There is no such thing as a subtropical hurricane, according to the National Weather Service.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Russia losing aircraft faster than new ones
SOURCE	https://www.newsweek.com/russia-likely-losing-aircraft-faster-replace-uk-1757360
GIST	<p>In the Ukraine war, Russia has been losing aircraft faster than it can replace them due to poor training of air forces, the U.K. Defense Ministry has said.</p> <p>In its daily intelligence update on the Ukraine war on Monday, the ministry noted that on November 3, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, Valeriy Zaluzhnyi said Russia had lost over twice the number of aircraft in Ukraine than it had in the nine-year Soviet-Afghan War—278 aircraft lost in Ukraine compared to 119 in Afghanistan.</p> <p>"Whilst we cannot independently verify these figures, Russia's continued lack of air superiority is likely exacerbated by poor training, loss of experienced crews, and heightened risks of conducting close air support in dense air defence zones," said the U.K. Defense Ministry.</p> <p>"This is unlikely to change in the next few months. Russia's aircraft losses likely significantly outstrip their capacity to manufacture new airframes. The time required for the training of competent pilots further reduces Russia's ability to regenerate combat air capability."</p> <p>Ukraine's Defense Ministry tweeted on Sunday that between February 24 and November 6, Russia had lost 277 military jets and 1,465 drones. It added that around 75,930 Russian military personnel had died in the fighting, while 2,625 tanks and 5,611 armored combat vehicles had been destroyed or seized.</p> <p>In September, Russia said that nearly 6,000 of its troops had died in the Ukraine war. That same month, the U.K. estimated this number to be 25,000 but that figure rose to 80,000 when it included wounded troops and military captured by Ukraine.</p> <p>Since Russian invaded its neighbor on February 24, it has made some progress and the east and the south of the country but has suffered recent setbacks from Ukrainian counteroffensives in occupied territories of Kherson in the south and Kharkiv in the east. These territories were taken by Russia from Ukraine in the early days of the war. The West, including the U.S., U.K. and the EU, have been supplying Ukraine with weapons that have proved to be very effective during the war.</p> <p>Over the last month, Russia has been conducting air strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure, leaving more than 4.5 million Ukrainians without electricity, many of them in the Kyiv region, said President Volodymyr Zelensky in a televised address on Thursday night. That amounts to more than 10 percent of Ukraine's pre-war population. Zelensky added that the Russian onslaught had "seriously damaged" around 40 percent of Ukraine's entire energy infrastructure.</p>

	On Sunday, the U.K. Defense Ministry said that Russia was firing military commanders to deflect blame for failures in Ukraine from the country's leadership . The ministry noted that in late October, Colonel General Alexander Lapin had reportedly been fired from his role as commander of Russia's Central Military District, which had been "widely criticized for poor performance on the battlefield." The Russian state news agency Tass later confirmed Lapin was no longer in his post, per <i>The New York Times</i> .
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HEADLINE	11/07 China foreign police stations in Canada
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/07/chinese-police-stations-toronto-canada
GIST	<p>At a strip mall convenience store sandwiched between a hotpot restaurant and hair salon on the outskirts of Toronto, a clerk serves a steady flow of customers on a drizzly autumn morning.</p> <p>In an office park a few miles away, a travel agent sorts through passports, arranging visas and booking tickets for her Chinese clientele.</p> <p>And on a quiet street in a nearby suburb, a resident has grown frustrated that he and his family have been roped into an international row over a supposed network of clandestine Chinese police stations.</p> <p>"I don't know what this is all about," the man said. "There's some kind of mistake. We have nothing to do with this. Look around. This is just a house."</p> <p>All three addresses have been linked to a purported network of unsanctioned and illegal Chinese "police stations" around the world, used to exert pressure on exiles and expatriates.</p> <p>The allegations came after a string of cases around the world in which China has been accused of overstepping diplomatic and legal norms to persecute its citizens far beyond its borders. In a report released last month, the Madrid-based NGO Safeguard Defenders detailed 54 alleged Chinese police stations around the world, prompting authorities in a number of countries, including Germany, the Netherlands and Canada, to launch police investigations.</p> <p>"It's crazy how brazen they've become with these operations," said Laura Harth of Safeguard Defenders. "The message from the ministry of foreign affairs – that you are not safe anywhere, that we can find you and that we can get to you – is very effective,"</p> <p>The operations are linked to police in Fuzhou, a city in China's Fujian province, said Harth, and are set up in close cooperation with the United Front Work Department, an organization in Beijing that monitors and attempts to influence Chinese nationals abroad.</p> <p>In most countries the "stations" consist of individuals with ties to China's security agency or intelligence network. Ireland is so far the only country where the police station was explicitly advertised as such. "In most cases, it seems to fly under the radar, which obviously makes sense, given the activities they're involved in," said Harth.</p> <p>The alleged aim of the stations is to force citizens to return home to face China's justice system. In June, China's vice-minister of public security, Du Hangwei, said that in the past year the government had "persuaded" 210,000 people to return to face charges for telecom fraud.</p> <p>Recently unsealed documents from a New York court provide a glimpse into the extent to which China is alleged to have engaged in a foreign interference campaign. In one case, a Chinese citizen living in Canada was pressured to return to China to face charges of embezzling nearly C\$380,000 (US\$280,000) in public funds.</p> <p>In the court document, the US alleges the pressure campaign is related to China's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and Operation Fox Hunt, a sprawling campaign against members of the diaspora which has been used to target corruption and dissent.</p>

The allegations – and a [recent incident](#) in which a diplomat attacked protesters outside the Chinese consulate in the British city of Manchester – further underscore the escalation of tactics used by the Chinese government against the pro-democracy movement abroad.

China's embassy in Canada denied that the locations were staffed by police officers, but nonetheless confirmed the addresses, describing them as “services stations” where expatriates can renew driver's licenses and access other services.

“For services such as driver's license renewal, it is necessary to have eyesight, hearing and physical examination. The main purpose of the service station abroad is to provide free assistance to overseas Chinese citizens in this regard,” the embassy said in a statement, adding that the stations' staff are volunteers and “not involved in any criminal investigation or relevant activity”.

But no one at the three known addresses in Toronto said they knew about the existence of the “services stations”. The travel agent rents space within two units occupied by the Canada Toronto Fuqing Business Association, which has also denied any knowledge of the police stations.

The allegation that Chinese police officers are operating on Canadian soil is likely to raise tensions once again between Ottawa and Beijing, a year after the two nations ended their standoff after the arrests of the Huawei executive Meng Wenzhou in Canada and the Canadian businessmen Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in China.

“It's an outrageous and brazen intrusion on Canadian sovereignty – especially since Beijing has admitted that these stations exist and has confirmed their locations,” Michael Chong, a Conservative lawmaker and foreign affairs critic, said. “And the establishment of these illegal police stations is a symptom of a much deeper problem.”

The Chinese government has interfered in democracies for years, he said, pointing to allegations of election interference in Canada's most recent federal election, as well as instances in which Uyghur people, Tibetan students and Hong Kong pro-democracy activists in Canada have faced harassment.

Chong, who is barred from visiting China because of his outspoken criticism of Beijing, said Canada's federal government needs to “haul in ambassador [Cong Peiwu] for a démarche” – or official diplomatic reprimand – and demand an explanation for the “violation of international law”.

Chong called on the government to review the accreditation of all Chinese diplomats in the country, to ensure they are not involved in the operation, as well as the immigration status of anybody working out of the offices who is involved in “intimidation operations”.

“Beijing doesn't think democracies are capable of standing up to the authorities of Beijing on their own soil. And that has to end,” Chong said.

The federal government has not publicly commented on the police stations and the RCMP has said little, only confirming the existence of an investigation.

But for dissidents, the revelations only confirm their perception that China has grown increasingly brazen.

Cheuk Kwan of the Toronto Association for Democracy in China said that the alleged police stations marked an escalation in Beijing's tactics.

“There have been telephone calls in the middle of the night that family members won't find work if you don't cooperate with the government, or that your parents' phone number will be posted online and they'll be harassed. Or with Uyghurs, that the rest of your family will be put in camps,” he said. “[But] the physicality of this – that there are actual locations – is alarming. This is simply a visible kind of landmark for the coercion, harassment, that has long existed.”

The RCMP says it has advised residents to contact police if they experience harassment by a foreign government. But Cheuk said he and others have repeatedly asked the federal police force to intervene in cases of harassment and intimidation only to be told the issues are best dealt with by local police, or even police back in China.

“They would just tell us this was a family feud or something that didn’t merit investigation,” he said. “And that’s the most insidious part of this, the naivety [of the federal police] – of them not taking it seriously for so long.”

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Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	11/07 Ransomware attacks on hospitals take toll
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/ransomware-attacks-hospitals-take-toll-patients-rcna54090
GIST	<p>When Kelley Parsi took her 3-year-old son to a CommonSpirit Health hospital in Des Moines, Iowa, after tonsil surgery, she expected doctors to quickly treat him for pain and dehydration and send him home. Instead, she said, the trip became one of the scariest days of her life.</p> <p>The computer system that automatically calculated medicine doses wasn’t working, the resident doctor informed her, and he mistakenly “gave him five times what was prescribed,” she said. She later learned a cyberattack had taken down some of the hospital’s digital tools.</p> <p>She waited for hours, terrified, while her son’s body processed the overdose.</p> <p>“Because of the cyberattack, my son was overdosed on pain medicine,” Parsi said. He made a full recovery, she said.</p> <p>Ransomware, in which hackers extort companies and organizations by breaking into and often holding computers and files hostage, has become one of the toughest problems in cybersecurity and a threat to industries around the world. But it can be especially damaging when it hits hospital chains, causing trickle-down damage for patient care across the country.</p> <p>Ransomware hackers hit MercyOne in early October, part of a larger breach that caused hospitalwide outages at multiple health systems, according to The Des Moines Register. CommonSpirit Health, a nonprofit health system based in Chicago, oversees 140 hospitals in 21 states; it was not clear how many of them hospitals were affected, and it declined to share the number. Brett Callow, an analyst at the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft, said 19 large U.S. hospital chains have been hacked with ransomware this year.</p> <p>Parsi’s hospital, MercyOne, declined to comment about her situation, citing patient confidentiality. A spokesperson said in a statement that it was “committed to providing safe quality care for all patients we serve in their time of need.”</p> <p>Ransomware attacks have hit a variety of sensitive industries, but few, if any, have the kind of potential for harm as attacks on hospitals.</p> <p>For Rachel Cupples of Western Washington, the CommonSpirit Health ransomware attack meant delaying important surgery for weeks. After she went to the emergency room in late September for unbearable pain, doctors told her she had an ovarian cyst that needed to be removed quickly. But when she tried to schedule the procedure, Cupples found that her hospital was no longer taking new surgery appointments because of the ransomware attack. Like some other CommonSpirit Health hospitals that were affected, hers announced it was having trouble scheduling new patients.</p>

“I called and found out that all their systems were down and that they couldn’t schedule or do anything,” said Cupples, 44.

“Nobody really knew at that point how, or at least they weren’t sharing, like, how long it was going to be.”

Eventually, CommonSpirit Health brought its scheduling systems back online late last month, and Cupples had successful surgery Thursday.

There has been only a single credible public accusation of ransomware’s leading to a person’s death in a hospital. An Alabama woman is [suing her hospital](#), which was not affiliated with CommonSpirit Health, after her newborn died, and she said it did not disclose that it was providing imperiled care because of a cyberattack. A [study](#) last year from the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency found that hospitals hit with ransomware tended to experience more strain, which often correlates with higher patient mortality rates.

Parsi and Cupples said they blamed the hackers, not the hospitals, for their pain caused by delayed care. “It wasn’t the doctors. It wasn’t the medical receptionist or any of those folks,” Cupples said. “They really did their best.”

Megan Stifel, the chief strategy officer at the Institute for Security and Technology, a think tank that works to improve U.S. cybersecurity policy, said ransomware against hospitals shows how out of control criminal hackers have gotten.

“If you take a hospital system offline for some period of days, tremendous backlog happens,” Stifel said. “What worse of an illustration do we need to grab people’s attention to say this is a real problem? This impacts human life.”

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HEADLINE	11/07 Palestinian Hamas moves online
SOURCE	https://cybernews.com/news/hamas-moves-online-cyber-threat/
GIST	<p>Hamas, a militant Palestinian group, will expand into the cyber domain, where it is slowly becoming a threat actor capable of executing offensive operations, a new report by the Atlantic Council think tank finds.</p> <p>The report urges the United States to look more closely at the growing offensive capabilities of militant and terrorist organizations. Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the US, Canada, the European Union, and other Western powers.</p> <p>“Hamas, despite being a well-studied militant and terrorist organization, is expanding its offensive cyber and information capabilities, a fact that is largely overlooked by counterterrorism and cyber analysts alike,” Simon Handler, a fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Cyber Statecraft Initiative under the Digital Forensic Research Lab, claims.</p> <p>Green hat hacker</p> <p>According to Handler, Hamas primarily prioritizes espionage and information maneuvers so far, and “offensive cyber operations are a new way for Hamas to do old things better.”</p> <p>The report also calls Hamas a ‘green hat hacker’. This term is not specific to the group but is recognized in the information security community as describing someone who is relatively new to the hacking world, lacking sophistication but fully committed to making an impact.</p> <p>Hamas is trying hard. For example, it initiated a cyber espionage campaign in Israel during the 2012 FIFA World Cup, when it inserted spyware into a popular Android application called Golden Cup and reaped reams of data from compromised smartphones.</p>

According to the report, devices of Israeli soldiers were also infected, as the adversary successfully collected sensitive information about various Israel Defense Forces (IDF) bases, offices, and military hardware, such as tanks and armored vehicles.

Israeli officials were naturally inclined to think that the campaign was the work of a nation-state actor – traditional geopolitical nemesis Iran, for example, or China – and overlook [the possibility of a non-state actor](#), such as Hamas, being responsible.

Safer and cheaper

According to Handler, many countries make the same mistake. For instance, the US mostly focuses on the so-called “big four” of nation-state adversaries – China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Washington, the report claims, lacks policy countermeasures designed to deal with militant or terrorist organizations – such as Hamas.

“The group’s burgeoning cyber capabilities, alongside its propaganda tactics, pose a threat to Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and US interests in the region—especially in tandem with the group’s capacities to fund, organize, inspire, and execute kinetic attacks,” the Atlantic Council report says.

“This combination of capabilities has historically been the dominion of more powerful state actors. However, the integration of offensive cyber capabilities into the arsenals of traditionally kinetic non-state actors, including militant organizations, is on the rise due to partnerships with state guarantors and the general proliferation of these competencies worldwide.”

Throughout its history, Hamas has used suicide bombings, rocket fire, sniper attacks, knifings, and civilian kidnappings to target both Israel and the more moderate Palestinian Authority.

But the group seemingly realizes – or has been forced to realize by the IDF – that [unrestrained terrorism](#) comes at a cost to its reputation. So it is looking for safer and cheaper methods of influence.

“Deploying offensive cyber capabilities involves exceptionally low risks and costs for operators. For groups like Hamas that are worried about potential retaliation, these operations present an effective alternative to kinetic operations that would otherwise provoke an immediate response,” Handler claims in the report.

No Iron Dome in cyberspace

In 2019, Israel deemed the offensive cyber threat to be critical enough for the IDF to carry out a strike to destroy Hamas’s cyber headquarters. It was one of the first acknowledged kinetic operations by the military in response to a cyber operation.

However, Hamas’ cyber operations continue to this day. What’s more, according to the Israeli threat intelligence company Cybereason, recent discoveries indicate a new level of sophistication in the group’s operations.

For example, Hamas has been using malware featuring enhanced stealth mechanisms. This indicates that it is trying to protect the operational security of its cyber espionage missions in Israel and the West Bank, where the PA is located.

“There is no Iron Dome in cyberspace,” Handler warns, and adds that Hamas’ cyber program may evolve in the future – just like the group’s infamous rocket terror program, which began with crude, inaccurate rockets, but then reached the level of a sophisticated long-range rocket fire.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Hacktivists leak Russia central bank trove?
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/ukrainian-hacktivists-claim-to-leak-trove-of-documents-from-russias-central-bank/

Ukrainian hackers claim to have breached the Central Bank of Russia, stealing thousands of internal documents.

A 2.6 GB [folder](#) released publicly on Thursday and partially reviewed by The Record contains 27,000 allegedly stolen files detailing the bank's operations, its security policies, and the personal data of some of its current and former employees.

"If Russia's Central Bank cannot protect its own data, how can it guarantee the stability of the ruble?" hackers wrote on the Telegram messaging app. The alleged heist was carried out by members from Ukraine's IT Army — a group of more than 200,000 cyber volunteers formed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February to conduct coordinated distributed denial-of-service attacks on Russian websites.

The central bank is one of Russia's most important financial institutions, and serves as the architect of state monetary policy and regulator of the national currency. It denied that its system had been hacked and said that all leaked documents were already in the public domain, Russian media [reported](#).

This is not the first time that hackers have claimed to have breached the central bank. In March, hackers from the group Anonymous [said](#) they had leaked 35,000 documents from the bank and published them online.

"For spies, media organizations, and human rights activists, it is a treasure trove with insights and stories that could have catastrophic consequences for Russia," [according to](#) Kenneth Geers, an analyst at a data security startup Very Good Security.

So far, it is difficult to say how significant the alleged leak of documents is. Some of the published files date back nearly two decades, while others outline the bank's strategy for the next two years.

Some documents detail the Russian policy of replacing imported computer programs and software with domestic technology "to ensure the smooth operation of the bank's payment system."

Due to sanctions imposed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, many international tech companies have left Russia or suspended operations, forcing the Kremlin to look for local alternatives.

The IT Army also released documents that allegedly contain the personal data of Russian servicemen, their phone numbers, and bank account numbers.

Russian banks have been the most popular targets among Ukrainian hackers since the beginning of the invasion. Earlier in September, the IT Army also hacked Russia's third-largest bank, Gazprombank.

A DDoS attack took the bank's website down for four hours, preventing customers from sending payments, accessing their personal accounts, and using mobile banking, according to the IT Army.

"For a successful attack, we had to go through their entire network and find vulnerabilities there," an IT Army representative told The Record.

In order to bypass Russian DDoS protection services, the IT Army claimed to have created "a special program" that attacks the system "in a non-standard way, so it is difficult to deal with it."

Gazprombank confirmed the September attack, and its vice president Olexander Egorkin even [praised](#) the Ukrainian hackers for their "creativity" and "professionalism."

"The attack was so powerful that even Rostelecom — Russia's largest internet provider — suffered serious difficulties," Egorkin said at a conference in September. Nonetheless, the impacts of the group's cyberattacks on the course of the cyber war between Ukraine and Russia remains unclear. Some of the operations have managed to temporarily disrupt Russian businesses or at least cause concern.

	<p>Demand in the Russian banking sector for services that help defend against cyberattacks and data leaks has increased sharply since the start of the war, according to Russian media.</p> <p>The departure from Russia of global technology and cybersecurity companies like Cisco, IBM, Oracle, Imperva, Fortinet, Norton, and Avast has also made Russian businesses more vulnerable to cyberattacks.</p> <p>This only encourages the IT Army. “Our goal remains the same: make it difficult for banks to process payments, delay the fulfillment of financial obligations, and sow doubt among those who receive payments through them,” the hackers said.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Killnet targets Eastern Bloc govt. sites
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/killnet-targets-eastern-bloc-government-sites-but-fails-to-keep-them-offline/
GIST	<p>Websites belonging to several state intelligence agencies across the former Eastern Bloc are online and functioning despite attempted distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks from a pro-Kremlin group over the weekend.</p> <p>The hacking group Killnet, which for months has targeted government agencies and companies that criticize Russia or support Ukraine, listed the sites for the intelligence services of Estonia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Moldova on its Telegram channel, suggesting it had successfully targeted them. However, any outages if they occurred appear to have been extremely brief and the sites are now all functioning normally.</p> <p>Bulgaria’s interior minister, Ivan Demerdzhiev, dismissed the significance of the attack, saying it was an “image attack aimed at creating certain moods and certain results in public attitudes” and reminded people that the website for the NATO and European Union member’s intelligence agency was not connected to its operational IT services.</p> <p>Bulgaria’s prosecutor-general, Ivan Geshev, previously said Killnet was behind a “large-scale” attack on Bulgarian government websites in October. Killnet claimed the attack was a punishment “for betrayal to Russia and the supply of weapons to Ukraine.”</p> <p>The group, which has not displayed any sophisticated capabilities since emerging in February, primarily aims to target websites and organizations that will garner media attention.</p> <p>Cybersecurity experts have told The Record that the media coverage around these attacks is often disproportionate considering they cause no lasting damage and do not allow the attacker access to sensitive information.</p> <p>In an industry notice published on Friday, the FBI said it was “aware of Pro-Russian hacker groups employing DDoS attacks to target critical infrastructure companies with limited success.”</p> <p>“These attacks are generally opportunistic in nature and, with DDoS mitigation steps, have minimal operational impact on victims; however, hackers will often publicize and exaggerate the severity of the attacks on social media. As a result, the psychological impact of DDoS attacks is often greater than the disruption of service,” the notice added.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Password-hacking attacks on the rise
SOURCE	https://www.zdnet.com/article/password-hacking-attacks-are-on-the-rise-heres-how-to-stop-your-accounts-from-being-stolen/
GIST	<p>Cyber crooks are making almost 1,000 attempts to hack account passwords every single second – and they’re more determined than ever, with the number of attacks on the rise.</p>

The figures come from [Microsoft's Digital Defense Report 2022](#) and are based on analysis of trillions of alerts and signals collected from the company's worldwide ecosystem of products and services.

It warns that cyberattacks are on the rise, with account passwords still very much the main target of hackers – particularly as many accounts are vulnerable because they lack any additional layers of protection beyond the password itself to help keep them secure.

According to Microsoft, the volume of password-based attacks has risen to an estimated 921 attacks every second – representing a 74% increase in just one year for what's the primary method through which accounts are compromised.

Attacks against passwords include [brute force attacks](#) attempting to crack [simple or common passwords](#), attackers attempting to use [leaked usernames and passwords](#) to access other accounts owned by the victim, and [phishing attacks](#) designed to dupe victims into handing over their login credentials.

The report suggests that 90% of accounts that get hacked aren't protected by 'strong authentication' – meaning that the vast majority of accounts that get breached only have one layer of protection as opposed to having an additional layer of [multi-factor authentication](#) (MFA) for added verification.

But according to figures from Microsoft, the number of accounts protected by MFA remains low, even for administrator accounts, with under one in three protected with an additional layer of authentication – although the number of accounts protected in this way is slowly rising.

Nonetheless, while there's been an increase in accounts with additional layers of protection, many remain vulnerable to attackers who can exploit compromised accounts to conduct harmful activity, including stealing sensitive data, [conducting business email compromise attacks](#), deploying [malware](#), launching [ransomware attacks](#), and more.

"Many cyberattacks are successful simply because basic security hygiene has not been followed," said Microsoft – and the company urges organizations and users to apply minimum standards to help protect accounts as even basic security hygiene still protects against 98% of attacks.

This includes [protecting accounts with MFA](#), so if a password is hacked, the attacker will struggle to access the account without the user being made aware that something is wrong – [although even MFA isn't infallible](#).

It's also recommended that [zero-trust cybersecurity principals](#) are applied across networks and devices, so it's difficult for an attacker to gain full access to systems with a single login using a compromised account. Software, applications and operating systems should also be [kept up to date with the latest security patches](#) in order to prevent cyber attackers from exploiting known vulnerabilities to access and hide malicious activity on networks.

And in the event of suspecting that your password has been hacked, you should change it immediately – and consider [using a password manager](#) to help ensure each of your accounts is secured with a password that's both strong and unique to help protect your data from hackers.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Disinformation threat beyond election day
SOURCE	https://www.cyberscoop.com/disinformation-threat-midterm-elections/
GIST	<p>Disinformation continues spreading online ahead of Tuesday's midterms — casting doubt on everything from the vote-counting process to the trustworthiness of ballot drop boxes — threatening to further destroy confidence in the democratic process.</p> <p>But the biggest threat from these falsehoods and lies may come after voting ends and as officials begin announcing winners in contentious and tight elections around the country.</p>

“I certainly would not expect the disinformation to end on Election Day,” said Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who now directs the Defending Democratic Institutions project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “I think in fact, that it will grow, particularly in a context in which it appears as though, for example, somebody who’s an election denier is losing.”

Researchers and national security officials warn that how these narratives play out and whether they gain widespread acceptance could determine if a significant percentage of the public rejects the outcome of the elections. And if they don’t, they warn, that could trigger outbursts of political violence.

With influential figures such as former President Trump and his allies amplifying false voter fraud storylines, such as claims that delays in vote counting provide an opportunity for malfeasance, the immediate aftermath of the election will provide the best opportunity for bad actors to cast doubt on the process.

“That period after Election Day until the elections are certified can be a point of heightened risk because of the misinformation and disinformation that we see that’s out there,” Jen Easterly, director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, said on the sidelines of the Michigan Cyber Summit last month.

In the run-up to the election, federal officials have warned of a variety of threats — from [lies about hacked voting machines](#) to [manufactured claims of voter suppression or fraud](#) being spread online to undermine the election’s legitimacy. National-security officials [maintain](#) that there is [no major risk that the voting infrastructure will be hacked](#) and votes changed, but that may not matter if disinformation about hacked voting systems or discarded ballots gains traction among the public.

In an effort to confront any Election Day concerns, CISA officials said the agency has established a special operations center staffed with officials from across the federal government, election organizations and the private sector. CISA is also hosting a virtual cyber “situational awareness room” so that state and local level officials can get support on voting day and for many hours after the polls close.

Against the backdrop of distrust around the elections, federal officials are increasingly concerned that conspiracy theories and falsehoods have created a major threat to the physical violence at the polls. Disinformation “not only undermines the integrity of our election system,” Easterly said, but “can also do things like incite violence against these very hardworking, dedicated public servants, who are making sure that our elections are run effectively.”

These concerns mean that cybersecurity threats are no longer the chief worry for local election officials. “In supporting election officials, they tell me that physical security is their No. 1 concern,” said Geoff Hale, who leads the Election Security Initiative at CISA.

Influential figures are stoking these narratives. Last month, for example, former President Trump and Rep. Jim Jordan, the Ohio Republican, [seized on a report that election officials in Colorado](#) had sent mailers encouraging 30,000 noncitizens to register to vote. Trump and Jordan saw this honest mistake — which was quickly corrected and would not have resulted in noncitizens gaining the ability to vote — as evidence of a plot. Writing on Twitter, Jordan questioned Colorado officials’ claim that it was an accident with a question: “Anyone actually believe them?”

Two years after the 2020 election, when conspiracy theories and political grandstanding inspired the armed mob storming the U.S. Capitol to prevent a peaceful transfer of power, disinformation researchers and federal officials are on edge, fearful that this year’s election could see a repeat of 2020’s election fraud narratives — and falsely cast doubt on the election’s legitimacy in the minds of many Americans.

Unlike in 2020, online audiences in 2022 are far more familiar — and perhaps more receptive to — election conspiracies after the onslaught of similar messages during the last election, researchers warn.

“Audiences are already primed just from all that happened in 2020,” said Kate Starbird, a disinformation researcher and a co-founder of the University of Washington’s Center for an Informed Public.

“The same sort of narratives that we saw in 2020. We expect to see a lot of them again this time around,” said Mike Caulfield, a research scientist who leads the [Center for an Informed Public’s rapid response efforts](#). “You’re going to see narratives about machines being hacked, or designed to steal votes, you’re going to see reports of supposed poll worker collusion where poll workers are somehow trying to discard or alter people’s votes.”

But, he said, the broad familiarity with election fraud narrative at the scale that we currently have — that’s new and that’s going to impact how things unfold.”

Researchers have observed foreign groups trying to target U.S. audiences with voter fraud narratives, too, but these campaigns have failed to gain traction and reach large audiences, a [report by the Election Integrity Partnership](#), a research consortium, concluded last week.

But foreign government operatives are nonetheless eager to bolster the perception that they are meddling in U.S. politics. Russian businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin, a key figure in Russian information operations, claimed on Monday that he continues to wield influence in the U.S. “We have interfered [in U.S. elections], we are interfering and we will continue to interfere,” Prigozhin [said in remarks reported by Reuters](#). “Carefully, accurately, surgically and in our own way, as we know how to do.”

In the absence of a successful foreign influence campaign, Americans are pushing most of the election falsehoods circulating online, researchers with Recorded Future’s Insikt Group [concluded in a report published Monday](#). For instance, Trump and many of his fiercest supporters continue to post claims that voting equipment manufacturers Dominion, Election Systems and Software and Smartmatic are part of a complicated, sprawling conspiracy that stole the election from Trump.

After Election Day, those false claims about voting systems — sometimes based on genuine technical issues or human mistakes — can be weaponized to sow doubt in the results, said Crag Terron, a threat analyst with Recorded Future’s Insikt Group. “If the vote doesn’t go the way that people that share this narrative want it to, then this is a narrative that can be pointed to, and get people on side ahead of 2024.”

Twitter may be another complicating factor after the election. Elon Musk’s acquisition of Twitter and massive layoffs have researchers questioning whether the platform, which plays a key role in online discourse around political events, will live up to its own policies regarding elections.

Twitter officials maintain that the company’s content-moderation policies remain in place and that its commitments regarding “election integrity — including harmful misinformation that can suppress the vote and combatting state-backed information operations — remain a top priority,” as Yoel Roth, Twitter’s head of safety and integrity, [put it in a thread](#).

But huge staff cuts mean that “the ways that platform worked yesterday are not going to be the ways that it works today,” Starbird said.

Over the weekend, Twitter [delayed rolling out changes](#) to Twitter’s account verification process — which will cost \$8 per month and reportedly no longer require users to confirm their identity to get a blue checkmark. That change could muddle things further for election officials who have encouraged voters to trust information published by official government sources.

“Although the mechanics of Musk’s new verification scheme remain unclear, there appears to be a clash between money-making and validating authenticity,” Eddie Perez, a former director for civic integrity at Twitter, told CyberScoop. “And in the midst of an election, voters need to know if what they are reading is real or fake.”

	That uncertainty is especially concerning against the backdrop of dozens of Republican candidates on the ballot who have endorsed Trump's claims of a stolen election. Their commitment to the election fraud narrative may mean that claims of irregularities at the polls live on far beyond Election Day.
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HEADLINE	11/07 Iranian threat actors targeting healthcare
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/cybercrime/iranian-actors-targeting-healthcare-via-spear-phishing-vulnerability-exploit
GIST	<p>The Department of Health and Human Services Cybersecurity Coordination Center released an alert detailing the threat of Iranian nation state actors against the healthcare sector. The FBI thwarted an Iranian-backed cyberattack against Boston Children's Hospital in June 2021.</p> <p>The white paper details the groups with a primary focus on the healthcare sector, as well as crucial mitigation factors and common exploits. Provider entities should review the insights to ensure they're employing the necessary security measures.</p> <p>And China and Russia aren't the only nation states exhibiting malicious behavior on the international stage. Iran and North Korea also continue to carry out sophisticated intrusions targeting U.S. victims.</p> <p>Last year, FBI Director Christopher Wray detailed the agency's efforts against what he called "one of the most despicable cyberattacks I've seen." Actors sponsored by the Iran government attempted to exploit the Boston Children's Hospital. The attack was blocked after an intelligence partner alerted the FBI to an impending target, prompting the deployment of its cyber squad.</p> <p>It was those quick actions that enabled the hospital to identify and mitigate the threat, spotlighting the importance of threat sharing and collaboration in the health sector.</p> <p>Fueled by past efforts, the HC3 report notes Iranian threat actors are historically risk-averse and "infamous for wiper malware as well as retaliatory attack strategies." These actors commonly engage in spear phishing, DDoS attacks, theft of sensitive data, website defacement, and social media-driven operations.</p> <p>What's more, these groups have signed agreements with both Russia and China on cybersecurity and information tech, furthering their cyber capabilities and possible impacts.</p> <p>Four groups are known to heavily target the healthcare sector and medical researchers, with spear phishing as the most common initial intrusion vector. One group frequently leverages lures tied to the healthcare sector, as well as job postings, password policies, or resumes.</p> <p>HC3 is most concerned by the ability of these groups to use fake personas that realistically mimic legitimate entities, including believable CC'd email addresses, which make it difficult for users to detect.</p> <p>The use of email as a pivot point is a common tactic used in healthcare, but also one of its biggest challenges in terms of defense. Providers should use the HC3 white paper to review current processes to gauge the current posture of their email program.</p> <p>The insights detail the three phases of an attack, as well as the aftermath for providers to review. The report also contains a list of commonly exploited vulnerabilities that should be immediately patched or segmented from the network.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Threat group weaponizes employee trust
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/security-awareness/threat-group-weaponizes-employee-trust-with-impersonation-of-healthcare-software-solutions

The Zeon threat group is impersonating software solutions and targeting the healthcare sector, weaponizing the trust that is often inherent to the healthcare workforce and capitalizing on security failures.

A recent alert to Health-ISAC members shows the targeted attacks began on Oct. 19 and were sent to 35,000 addresses, with another 480,000 addresses reached on Oct. 20 and 21. On Sept. 26, another member-alert warned the Roy/Zeon threat group was impersonating a Health-ISAC member by using fake invoices to lure victims to a malicious call center.

“The bad guys are continuously becoming innovative and creative,” said Errol Weiss, Health-ISAC’s chief security officer, in an exclusive interview with SC Media. This new Zeon campaign is “where it’s really gotten bad, where there are no evil links, no evil attachments; it’s just all text, and they’re able to craft something that scares people and it makes them do things they wouldn’t ordinarily do.”

In short, the tactic is “social engineering at its finest; psychological warfare,” he added, declining to name the specific vendors used in the campaigns. “They’re getting people into a mindset where they’re very vulnerable, and then they’re doing dumb things.”

Weiss is referring to the latest Zeon Group campaign, which is successfully targeting the healthcare sector in force. The group is one of three to rise from the ashes after the dissolution of Conti. All three created their own versions of the BazarCall spear-phishing attacks, a targeted callback phishing tactic where nefarious actors dupe victims with fake subscription service offers.

These calls were actually “used by the operators to silently install malware and exfiltrate data once access is obtained,” according to an August New Jersey Cybersecurity & Communications alert.

Once employees call the phone number, they’re being walked-through an installation of “legitimate remote access tools, and then the bad guys have access to your computer,” Weiss explained.

By June, Zeon was impersonating a range of brands that targeted a range of sectors, including insurance and tech, and others with high annual revenue, but not healthcare specifically. The group soon pivoted again, impersonating “legitimate healthcare organizations delivering software solutions focused on patient data,” according to the Health-ISAC member alert.

“The first wave identified impersonating legitimate healthcare software occurred in late September,” Health-ISAC warned. These campaigns proved effective and informed the continued targeting of the healthcare sector.

Specifically, the group began contacting employees of targeted organizations and achieved unauthorized access via the Zoho remote access tool. The following day, advanced intelligence confirmed the Zeon campaigns on Oct. 21, when the group began leveraging two Microsoft Exchange remote code execution (RCE) vulnerabilities (CVE-2022-41040 and CVE-2022-41082).

The Zeon group is relying on big brands and healthcare insurance companies mentioned by third-party providers. Weiss stressed that the templates used by Zeon are highly creative, with a range of keywords to “mix things up and avoid spam detection filters.” So the tens of thousands of messages sent out are all different, but also the same nefarious attempt.

“Roy/Zeon’s attack manifests in the weaponization of ZoHo, Anydesk, Cobalt Strike, or RMM Software. This presumes constant communication with C2 from the infected network. Tracking abnormal signaling can assist in identifying the beacon,” according to the alert.

Proactive recommendations

The risk to healthcare is high given the sheer volume of workforce members. Temporary and contract workers may come in, but not receive the same proper training and awareness before they start, Weiss noted. Organizations that rely on a specific timeframe for training may overlook this demographic.

	<p>“Lots of bad things can happen in those first 90 days,” said Weiss. Entities should be taking a stricter approach like the banking and finance sectors, where email service is seen as an entitlement and “not automatically turned on for everybody.”</p> <p>The Health-ISAC bulletin encourages entities to revisit phishing campaigns, particularly centered on the phishing attempts masquerading as legitimate healthcare software suites to help users recognize the possible phishing lures, which are hard to detect without previous knowledge.</p> <p>“Special emphasis” should be placed on network investigation tools typical of exfiltration-centric groups, including “Cobalt Strike sessions opened, Metasploit, and, most importantly, customized PowerShell commands,” the alert warns.</p> <p>The group relies on “extensive lateral movement” to find the most important data, which requires “action and monitoring for network segmentation, network hierarchy, and abnormal in-network behavior.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Critical infrastructure attacks doubled
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/news/critical-infrastructure/attacks-on-critical-infrastructure-doubled-in-the-past-year-microsoft-says
GIST	<p>In the Microsoft Digital Defense Report 2022, the software maker said cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure around the world jumped from 20% of all nation-state attacks Microsoft detected to 40%.</p> <p>The report, released Friday, said the large increase in attacks on critical infrastructure was caused in large part to Russia’s attempts to damage Ukrainian infrastructure, along with aggressive espionage targeting of Ukraine’s allies, including the United States.</p> <p>Russia also accelerated its attempts to compromise IT companies as a way to disrupt or gain intelligence from their government customers in NATO member countries, Microsoft said. Ninety percent of Russian attacks Microsoft detected over the past year targeted NATO member states, and 48% of these attacks targeted IT firms based in NATO countries.</p> <p>While Russia’s ongoing war with Ukraine was a leading cause for the increase in nation-state attacks, the Microsoft report also cited stepped-up espionage activities on the part of China, Iran and North Korea, and an increased in financial cybercrime.</p> <p>In response to these increased attacks, Microsoft said security teams should pay attention to the basics: enabling multi-factor authentication; applying security patches; being intentional about who has privileged access to systems; and deploying modern security solutions. Microsoft pointed out that the average enterprise has some 3,500 connected devices that are not protected by basic endpoint protections — and attackers take advantage.</p> <p>With high-profile state actors having more conventional resources, cyberwarfare is still an attractive way to engage with peer and near-peer adversaries, said Mike Parkin, senior technical engineer at Vulcan Cyber. Infrastructure attacks are a way to damage an opponent without escalating to an open conflict, Parkin said.</p> <p>“Security teams protecting critical infrastructure need to be on their A-game and can’t afford to relax their security posture,” Parkin said. “Deploying the proper tools and training is more important now, given the current geopolitical and cybercriminal landscape, than it has been in the past. The same holds true for conventional businesses, particularly those in the defense and tech industries, and for non-critical infrastructure as well.”</p> <p>Craig Burland, chief information security officer at Inversion6, said organizations need to understand that the threat to critical infrastructure is real.</p>

	<p>“There’s no industry or business exempt from cyber threats,” Burland said. “If you review the list of target industries for nation-state and cybercriminal organizations, you will almost certainly find yours. Organizations with critical infrastructure must rethink and reprioritize the security investments they’ve been putting off, that project that’s perpetually understaffed, and that red metric they’ve been ignoring.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 FBI: politically motivated hacktivist activity
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/news/critical-infrastructure/fbi-warns-of-politically-motivated-hacktivist-activity-ddos-attacks-in-alert
GIST	<p>With the Nov. 8 general election nearing, the FBI issued a private industry notification on Friday warning of hacktivism activity and encouraged organizations to implement recommendations on mitigating distributed denial of service attacks.</p> <p>Pro-Russian hacktivist groups are using DDoS attacks to target critical infrastructure companies with limited success by providing the tools and guidance to anyone willing to conduct attacks on behalf of their cause, the FBI said in the alert.</p> <p>While the attacks are described as opportunistic in nature and have minimal operational impacts on victims, the hacktivists will often publicize and exaggerate the severity of the DDoS attacks of public-facing websites, along with social media profile defacement.</p> <p>The FBI said high-profile targets include financial institutions, health and medical facilities, emergency services, airports and government facilities.</p> <p>Coincidentally on Friday, Microsoft released its Digital Defense Report 2022, which showed the number of nation-state attacks on critical infrastructure increased from 20% of all such attacks Microsoft detected to 40%. The Redmond, Washington-software giant also pointed to the Russia-Ukraine conflict with the rise in attacks on critical infrastructure.</p> <p>As noted by Kaspersky’s Securelist blog on Monday, DDoS attacks were, more often than not, politically motivated in Q3 2022. The pro-Russian group Killnet took responsibility for attacks in Estonia, Lithuania, Japan and the U.S., including the US Electronic Federal Tax Payment System and attacks that took down airport websites. In turn, pro-Ukrainian hacktivists targeted Russian resources and media outlets.</p> <p>Other politically motivated DDoS attacks struck elsewhere, such as Taiwan in response to the visit by a sitting U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Israel, Kazakhstan, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere.</p> <p>The FBI says critical infrastructure organizations should enroll in denial-of-service protections services, partner with ISPs, create recovery plans and monitor network assets for suspicious activity that could indicate a secondary attack.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/08 Settlement in Experian, T-Mobile breaches
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/us-states-announce-16m-settlement-experian-t-mobile-over-data-breaches
GIST	<p>Authorities in 40 US states have reached a settlement totaling more than \$16 million with Experian and T-Mobile over data breaches suffered by the companies in 2012 and 2015.</p> <p>The multi-state settlement with Experian totals more than \$13.67 million and the settlement with T-Mobile is for \$2.5 million. In addition, each company has agreed to take steps to improve their data security practices.</p> <p>The attorneys general in several states published press releases on Monday announcing how much they will each receive from these settlements. Hawaii, for instance, is getting roughly \$180,000, Massachusetts</p>

will receive over \$625,000, New Jersey \$500,000, Pennsylvania \$460,000, Michigan \$360,000, and Nebraska will get \$140,000.

The settlement is related to two cybersecurity incidents. The first incident [came to light in 2012](#), when the Secret Service alerted an Experian subsidiary that an identity thief posing as a private investigator was abusing the company's services to obtain sensitive personal information. The incident involved more than three million queries seeking personal information.

The identity thief was caught and prosecuted, but authorities were unhappy that Experian never notified impacted individuals of the breach.

Then, in 2015, Experian disclosed an incident in which a hacker had accessed a network segment storing information of [15 million T-Mobile customers](#) — Experian stored T-Mobile customer data because the mobile carrier was using it to process customer credit applications.

Experian at the time did notify affected customers and offered them two years of free credit monitoring services, but authorities decided to take action against the credit reporting firm over its poor cybersecurity practices.

As part of the [settlement](#) announced this week, Experian will need to implement a comprehensive information security program and take other steps to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future.

It will also be required to offer impacted consumers five years of free credit monitoring services, in addition to the two years offered in 2015 and the two years that were offered as a result of a class action settlement in 2019.

As for [T-Mobile](#), the company is required to strengthen third-party oversight to ensure that vendors handling its customers' data can protect the sensitive information they are entrusted with.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Threat actors target India defense
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/android-rat-targets-india-defence/
GIST	<p>A malicious Android installation package has been spotted targeting Indian defense personnel since at least July 2021.</p> <p>The news comes from a report from external threat landscape management platform Cyfirma, which the company shared with Infosecurity over the weekend.</p> <p>“The APK [android package kit] file, in this case, is a decoy copy of a promotion letter to the ‘Subs Naik’ rank,” reads the technical write-up. “Once the victim falls prey to this malicious APK, and upon installation, this app appears as an Adobe Reader application icon (look-alike) on the device.”</p> <p>Once installed, the app asks for several permissions, including camera, microphone, internet and storage. “Access to any one of these can be dangerous and catastrophic for national security,” Cyfirma wrote.</p> <p>Further research from the company revealed that the threat actors behind the tool were using a variant of Spymax RAT (remote access trojan), a tool whose source code is already available on underground forums.</p> <p>“Spymax offers different android package builds – and one of the builds has a web view feature that allows the threat actors to inject any web link into the web view module,” the cybersecurity experts wrote. “After the successful installation of the generated APK, it takes the shape of an actual Android app.”</p>

	<p>In the attacks observed by Cyfirma, the threat actors used a Google Drive link pointing at a PDF file containing a list of Indian defense personnel who were awarded promotions to a higher rank. The link was reportedly shared through WhatsApp.</p> <p>“As the target is specifically the defense personnel and since the campaign has been running for quite some time, it is suspected that nation-state threat actor groups are behind the attack to exfiltrate sensitive information,” the security firm wrote.</p> <p>At the same time, based on the data analyzed, the research team said they could not attribute the current attack to a specific nation-state threat actor group.</p> <p>“Due to the present prevailing geopolitical situation in South Asia and its adjoining region, India is constantly dealing with aggressive cyber-attacks from its suspected neighbors,” Cyfirma concluded.</p> <p>“At present, without strong evidence, we are unable to attribute and correlate any nation-state threat actor who could be behind this attack.”</p> <p>The Cyfirma advisory comes roughly a month after the data breach notification website Leakbase claimed someone hacked the Swachhata Platform in India and stole 16 million user records.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Android banking Trojan Google Play Store
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/vultur-android-banking-trojan/
GIST	<p>The Android banking Trojan Vultur has reached a total of more than 100,000 downloads on the Google Play Store, says a new advisory from cybersecurity experts at Cleafy.</p> <p>The dropper hides behind a fake utility application. Because of its relatively limited permissions and small footprint, it appears as a legitimate app and can elude Google Play security measures.</p> <p>“Although most of the banking trojans are distributed via *ishing campaigns, TAs [threat actors] also use official app stores to deliver their malware using dropper applications, namely an application designed to download malware into the target device,” the Cleafy team explained.</p> <p>According to the advisory, one of the primary reasons behind this choice is reaching more potential victims and securing a greater likelihood of committing fraud.</p> <p>“Furthermore, since these droppers hide behind utility apps and come from a trusted source, they can mislead even ‘experienced’ users,” Cleafy wrote.</p> <p>“This explains why, even though an overview of this dropper was already described in the last article of Threat Fabric, we decided to publish this report and analyze in detail how this application ended up in the Play Store and attempted to commit bank fraud.”</p> <p>From a technical standpoint, after installation, the dropper uses advanced evasion techniques, including steganography, file deletion and code obfuscation, in addition to multiple checks before downloading the malware.</p> <p>“Once the banking trojan (Vultur) has been downloaded and installed through a fake update, threat actors can observe everything that happens on the infected devices and carry out bank fraud through account takeover attacks,” Cleafy explained.</p> <p>According to the security experts, the Vultur campaigns show how threat actors constantly improve their techniques to stay undetected using advanced evasion techniques.</p>

	<p>“At the same time, the use of official app stores to deliver banking trojans to reach a more significant number of potential victims is a new trend that is gaining strength,” Cleafy added. “We expect to see new sophisticated banking droppers campaigns on the official stores in the next months.”</p> <p>The advisory includes a list of Indicators of Compromise (IoCs) for Vultur infections. The technical write-up’s publication comes days after Malwarebytes released new data suggesting a group of four apps with over a million downloads is listed on Google Play and infected with the HiddenAds malware.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Maple Leaf Foods suffers outage
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/maple-leaf-foods-suffers-outage-following-weekend-cyberattack/
GIST	<p>Maple Leaf Foods confirmed on Sunday that it experienced a cybersecurity incident causing a system outage and disruption of operations.</p> <p>Maple Leaf Foods is Canada's largest prepared meats and poultry food producer, operating 21 manufacturing facilities, employing 14,000 people, and contracting over 700 barns. In 2021, the firm generated \$3.3 billion in sales.</p> <p>Hackers often launch cyberattacks during weekends, hoping to find incident responders understaffed, and maximize their chances for success.</p> <p>Despite the timing, the Canadian food packaging giant says its IT team took immediate action to respond to the incident.</p> <p>Currently, the firm's specialists are working with cybersecurity and recovery experts to resolve the situation as soon as possible.</p> <p>"The company is executing its business continuity plans as it works to restore the impacted systems," reads the announcement.</p> <p>"However, it expects that full resolution of the outage will take time and result in some operational and service disruptions."</p> <p>Maple Leaf Foods says it will continue to work with customers and partners to minimize the food supply disruption in the Canadian market.</p> <p>In a comment sent to BleepingComputer, a firm spokesperson said that their investigation is still underway, but it is yet to determine how the cybersecurity incident happened.</p> <p>"The outage is creating some operational and service disruptions that vary by business unit, plant, and site," reads the statement.</p> <p>As for the following stages of recovery, the spokesperson told us they expect the disruption to continue as they restore impacted systems but will strive to keep that impact to a minimum.</p> <p>"At this time, we are focused on restoring business continuity."</p> <p>"We do expect some disruption in our operations and service levels as we work through the restoration process, but our team is deploying our business continuity plan and implementing workarounds to mitigate the impact on our operations and business." - Maple Leaf Foods.</p> <p>Finally, the firm has added that they have no insight into any possible issues related to this incident impacting any of its partner companies.</p>

	At the time of writing, BleepingComputer has not noticed any announcements on cybercrime forums or ransomware gang extortion portals listing Maple Leaf Foods.
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HEADLINE	11/07 Azov ransomware is a destructive wiper
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/azov-ransomware-is-a-wiper-destroying-data-666-bytes-at-a-time/
GIST	<p>The Azov Ransomware continues to be heavily distributed worldwide, now proven to be a data wiper that intentionally destroys victims' data and infects other programs.</p> <p>Last month, a threat actor began distributing malware called 'Azov Ransomware' through cracks and pirated software that pretended to encrypt victims' files.</p> <p>However, instead of providing contact info to negotiate a ransom, the ransom note told victims to contact security researchers and journalists to frame them as the developers of the ransomware.</p> <p>As there was no contact info, and the listed contacts had no way of helping victims, we assumed that the malware was a data wiper.</p> <p>A diabolical data wiper</p> <p>Last week, Checkpoint security researcher Jiří Vinopal analyzed the Azov Ransomware and confirmed to BleepingComputer that the malware was specially crafted to corrupt data.</p> <p>The malware included a trigger time that would cause it to sit dormant on the victim's devices until October 27th, 2022, at 10:14:30 AM UTC, which would then trigger the corruption of all data on the device.</p> <p>Vinopal says it would overwrite a file's contents and corrupt data in alternating 666-byte chunks of garbage data. The number 666 is commonly associated with the biblical 'Devil,' clearly showing the malicious intent of the threat actor.</p> <p>"Each cycle exactly 666 bytes are being overwritten with random (uninitialized data) and the next 666 bytes are left original," Vinopal told BleepingComputer.</p> <p>"This works in a loop, so wiped file structure would look like this: 666 bytes of garbage, 666 bytes original, 666bytes of garbage, 666 bytes original, etc..."</p> <p>Today, the threat actor continues distributing the malware through the Smokeloader botnet, commonly found in fake pirated software and crack sites.</p> <p>At the time of this writing, there are already pages of submissions of this malware to VirusTotal for today alone, showing how many victims have been affected by this malware over the past two weeks.</p> <p>It is unclear why the threat actor is spending money to distribute a data wiper. However, theories range from it being done to cover up other malicious behavior or simply to 'troll' the cybersecurity community.</p> <p>Regardless of the reason, victims who are infected with Azov Ransomware will have no way of recovering their files, and as other executables are infected, they should reinstall Windows to be safe.</p> <p>Furthermore, as Smokeloader is being used to distribute the Azov data wiper, it is likely also installed with other malware, such as password-stealing malware. Therefore, it is essential to reset any passwords to email accounts, financial services, or other sensitive information.</p> <p>Finally, while the ransomware is named after the Ukrainian 'Azov' military regiment, this malware is likely not affiliated with the country and is just using the name as a false flag.</p>

HEADLINE	11/07 Group stole \$11M from African businesses
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/cybercrime-group-opera1er-stole-11m-from-16-african-businesses
GIST	<p>At least 16 African banks, financial services, and telecommunication companies have been identified as victims of the French-speaking threat group OPERA1ER, which has stolen at least \$11 million since 2018.</p> <p>A new report from Group-IB explains it has been tracking OPERA1ER's activities since 2019; however, they waited to publish its findings until the group resurfaced after a 2021 break. Now the gang is back in action, the analysts explain, allowing Group-IB to document their OPERA1ER TTPs from 2019 through 2021, as well as the latest iteration in 2022.</p> <p>The researchers reported OPERA1ER has successfully breached the targets' systems at least 30 times since 2018. As an example of the group's sophistication and coordination, the report added, one of the of the group's attacks used more than 400 mule accounts to make fraudulent money withdrawals.</p> <p>The group doesn't use exotic malware, in fact, the researchers said in the report that OPERA1ER's hallmark is easily accessible open source malware and everyday red-team frameworks like Metasploit and Cobalt Strike. OPERA1ER delivers remote access Trojans (RATs) through French-language email phishing lures and takes its time gathering intelligence about its victims before "cashing out," the report added.</p> <p>"Detailed analysis of the gang's recent attacks revealed an interesting pattern in their modus operandi: OPERA1ER conducts attacks mainly during the weekends or public holidays," Rustam Mirkasymov, head of cyber-threat research at Group-IB Europe, said in a statement. "It correlates with the fact that they spend from three to 12 months from the initial access to money theft."</p> <p>Mirkasymov added the gang could be based out of Africa and the total number of OPERA1ER group members is unknown.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 National Guard cyber forces 'surging'
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/risk/national-guard-cyber-forces-surging-to-help-states-protect-midterm-elections
GIST	<p>The National Guard has offered its 38 cyber units and 2,200 personnel to state and local election officials in an effort to help shore up cybersecurity during the 2022 US midterm elections.</p> <p>Politico reported that during the midterm elections, the National Guard will have a Joint Cyber Mission Center staffed with personnel from the National Guard, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), and Department of Homeland Security to help coordinate detection and response efforts and thwart cyber threats to the election.</p> <p>"We will surge during the election to ensure that we have 24 hour coverage throughout this whole process," Maj. Gen. Todd Hunt, adjutant general of the North Carolina National Guard, told Politico. "We are citizen soldiers, we live in this state, and we do have a vested interest in our state elections as well as our federal elections."</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 China likely stockpiling vulnerabilities
SOURCE	https://www.theregister.com/2022/11/07/china_stockpiles_vulnerabilities_microsoft_asserts/?&web_view=true

Microsoft has asserted that China's offensive cyber capabilities have improved, thanks to a law that has allowed Beijing to create an arsenal of unreported software vulnerabilities.

China's [2021 law](#) required organizations to report security vulnerabilities to local authorities before disclosing them to any other entity. The rules mean Beijing can use local research to hoard vulnerability information.

A year later, researchers from the Atlantic Council [found](#) there was a decrease in reported vulnerabilities coming from China – and an increase in anonymous reports.

Microsoft's 2022 Digital Defense Report, released last Friday, asserts the Chinese law "might" be enabling the Chinese government to weaponize the vulnerabilities.

"The increased use of zero days over the last year from China-based actors likely reflects the first full year of China's vulnerability disclosure requirements for the Chinese security community and a major step in the use of zero-day exploits as a state priority," [said](#) [PDF] Microsoft.

The company described China-based and -backed threat actors as "particularly proficient" when it comes to discovering and developing zero-day exploits.

Microsoft listed several vulnerabilities it said were first developed and deployed by Chinese actors before they were discovered and adopted by other attackers. Those attacks include [CVE-2021-35211 SolarWinds Serv-U](#), [CVE-2021-40539 Zoho ManageEngine ADSelfService Plus](#), CVE-2021-44077 Zoho ManageEngine ServiceDesk Plus, [CVE-2021-42321 Microsoft Exchange](#), and [CVE-2022-26134 Confluence](#).

According to [Microsoft](#), China stepped up its espionage and information-stealing cyber attacks in order to counter the USA's attempts to increase its influence in Southeast Asia.

Microsoft detailed multiple examples of major known campaigns linked to various Chinese state-sponsored threat actors:

- the targeting of 100 accounts affiliated with a prominent Southeast Asia intergovernmental organization by [Gallium](#) as the org announced meetings between the US government and regional leaders;
- Malware from Gadolinium on Solomon Islands government systems and malicious code from Radiumon in Papua New Guinea's telecommunications networks – both likely for intelligence collection purposes as Solomon Islands and China entered a military agreement;
- Campaigns targeting nations across the global South in line with its Belt and Road Initiative, including Namibia, Mauritius, and Trinidad and Tobago, among others, even as China considers countries like Trinidad and Tobago important partners in the region.

The 114-page report detailed other tactics – such as China's participation in foreign propaganda operations, alongside Russia and Iran.

Microsoft credited Russia with increasing the number of cyber attacks targeting critical infrastructure from 20 percent of all nation-state attacks it detected in 2021 to 40 percent in 2022, with most attacks due to Russia relentlessly targeting Ukraine.

Iran also reacted to deteriorating geo-political relationships by launching campaigns against US port authorities, in addition to swipes at Israel and the EU.

Meanwhile North Korea continued to steal cryptocurrency from financial and tech companies while launching attacks on aerospace companies and researchers. The hermit kingdom also attempted to gain access to global news organizations.

HEADLINE	11/07 SocGholish diversifies, expands malware
SOURCE	https://www.sentinelone.com/labs/socgholish-diversifies-and-expands-its-malware-staging-infrastructure-to-counter-defenders/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>Executive Summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since mid-2022, SocGholish operators have been significantly diversifying and expanding their infrastructure for staging malware with new servers. This helps the operators to counter defensive operations against known servers and scale up their operation. • SocGholish operators have been introducing on average 18 new malware-staging servers per month, with varying server uptimes. This marks an increase of 334% relative to the same average calculated over the first half of 2022. • The majority of the new servers have been located in Europe, with the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and France at the top of the list. <p>Overview</p> <p>SocGholish is a JavaScript-based framework that threat actors have used to gain initial access to systems since 2017. SocGholish uses social engineering to infect systems: it tricks users into running a malicious JavaScript payload that masquerades as a system or software update, such as a critical browser update.</p> <p>In recent campaigns, SocGholish operators have infected legitimate websites by injecting a drive-by-download mechanism that triggers the download of the payload through a second-stage server. A recent notable example is the infection of web assets of a media company used by multiple major news outlets.</p> <p>The rate at which SocGholish operators infect websites to establish initial points of contact with victims is massive, with reports of over 25000 newly infected websites since the beginning of 2022. We observe strong indications that SocGholish operators have been introducing new second-stage servers since mid-2022 at a very high rate as well.</p> <p>Attackers conduct a variety of activities after gaining access through SocGholish, such as system and network reconnaissance, establishing persistence, and deployment of additional tools and malware. This includes tools for remote access, such as Cobalt Strike and NetSupport, and ransomware, such as WastedLocker, which has been attributed to the threat actor EvilCorp.</p> <p>SocGholish Diversifies and Expands Its Server Infrastructure</p> <p>We observe that SocGholish operators have been introducing new second-stage servers since mid-2022 at a much higher rate than before – on average 18 servers per month.</p> <p>Over the first half of 2022, the SocGholish operators introduced 21 servers, an average of only 3.5 servers per month. Between July and October 2022, they introduced 73 new second-stage servers. This marks an increase of 334% relative to the same average calculated over the first half of 2022. The servers have been operational over time periods of different lengths spanning days, weeks, and months.</p> <p>In addition to scaling up the malware staging operation, introducing new second-stage servers helps SocGholish operators to counter defensive operations against known servers. This includes detection of network traffic to known servers as well as follow-up actions, such as denylisting the servers at endpoint- or network-level.</p> <p>From a geographical perspective, the majority of the new servers have been located in Europe, with 28 out of 73 servers being hosted in the Netherlands.</p> <p>We note that many of the servers are hosted at shadowed domains: attacker-created subdomains under compromised legitimate domains. Domain shadowing allows the SocGholish operators to abuse the benign reputations of the compromised domains and make detection more difficult.</p>

A recent [exception](#) to the use of domain shadowing is a second-stage server hosted on the Amazon Web Services domain d2j09jsarr7512[.]cloudfront.net. It remains to be seen whether the use of public Cloud infrastructure becomes a SocGholish trend.

Given the global impact of SocGholish, our observations are based on analyzing retrospective data (centered around URLs in the forms mentioned above) from the global submission-based databases urlscan.io and VirusTotal.

Conclusion

SocGholish has been active since 2017. In 2022, SocGholish operators continue to infect websites at a massive scale and have been significantly expanding and diversifying their malware staging infrastructure since mid-2022. The success of SocGholish in persisting on the threat landscape emphasizes the importance of regularly auditing the security posture and integrity of web servers, websites, and DNS records to detect and protect against website infections and domain shadowing.

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HEADLINE	11/07 TikTok ties to China: concerns remain
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/nov/07/tiktoks-china-bytedance-data-concerns
GIST	<p>In 2021 Android phone users around the world spent 16.2tn minutes on TikTok. And while those millions and millions of users no doubt had an enjoyable time watching clips on the addictive social video app, they also generated a colossal amount of data.</p> <p>TikTok collects information on how you consume its content, from the device you are using to how long you watch a post for and what categories you like, and uses that information to fine tune the algorithm for the app's main feed.</p> <p>For anyone with a passing knowledge of how platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Google function – or who has read Shoshana Zuboff's Age of Surveillance Capitalism – this data harvesting is not revelatory. However, when it comes to TikTok, the question that consumes many politicians and sceptics is where that data goes. More specifically: does all that information end up being accessed by the Chinese state?</p> <p>Owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, TikTok's success – more than 1 billion users worldwide – is combining with well-established fears about social media's data collection practices and concerns over China's geo-political ambitions to generate a background hum of distrust about the app.</p> <p>“As the geopolitical situation changes I suspect we will see companies such as TikTok will continue to be treated with some caution in the west,” says Alan Woodward, a professor of cybersecurity at Surrey University.</p> <p>The distrust has already been expressed in scrutiny from regulators and politicians around the world, worried about the amount of data TikTok collects and whether Chinese authorities have access to it.</p> <p>In the US, Donald Trump in August 2020 signed an executive order that blocked people from downloading the app, which was followed by an order for TikTok to sell its US business.</p> <p>The order issued on 6 August 2020 stated: “TikTok automatically captures vast swaths of information from its users, including Internet and other network activity information such as location data and browsing and search histories. This data collection threatens to allow the Chinese Communist party access to Americans' personal and proprietary information.”</p> <p>This, the order claimed, paves the way for China to track the locations of government employees, build dossiers for blackmail and conduct corporate espionage.</p> <p>The orders were never enforced due to legal challenges and then Trump leaving office. Trump's successor, Joe Biden, revoked the orders and instead directed the US commerce department to work with other agencies to produce recommendations to protect the data of people in the US from foreign adversaries.</p>

The US Committee on Foreign Investment, which scrutinises business deals with non-US companies, is also conducting a security review of TikTok. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have in recent months called for stricter regulation and inquiry.

In India, where TikTok had more than 200 million users, the government in September 2020 [banned](#) the platform and dozens of other Chinese apps, after warning that user data was being mined and profiled “by elements hostile to national security and defence of India”.

In Ireland, the data protection watchdog, which regulates TikTok on behalf of the EU, in September 2021 [launched an investigation](#) into “transfers by TikTok of personal data to China and TikTok’s compliance with the GDPR’s requirements for transfers of personal data to third countries”.

And the UK parliament [shut down its TikTok account](#) this August after a lobbying campaign by Conservative politicians, including former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith and recent leadership candidate Tom Tugendhat. In a letter to the speakers of the Houses of Commons and Lords, politicians claimed “data security risks associated with the app are considerable”. They [also alleged](#) that data from the UK, where the app has an estimated 18 million users, was “routinely transferred to China”.

TikTok’s use of data [have also been the subject](#) of several news investigations, including a report from [BuzzFeed](#) in June that, based on leaked recordings of internal TikTok meetings, said that China-based employees at ByteDance have accessed nonpublic data about US TikTok users. In one recording a member of TikTok’s trust and safety department said “everything is seen in China”, according to BuzzFeed.

Separately, [Forbes](#) reported in October that a China-based team at ByteDance planned to track two American citizens through the collection of TikTok location data.

Last week TikTok spelled out to its European users that in certain circumstances, for instance checking on the functioning of algorithms or for security reasons, China-based employees can [access their data](#). Earlier this year it acknowledged similar access to US user data.

But experts and analysts differ in their assessments of the TikTok data issue. Mere weeks after the UK lawmakers expressed their concern, the director of UK spy agency GCHQ, Jeremy Fleming, said he would encourage young people to use TikTok. This reflects a British security establishment view that the app is not problematic because it does not process data in China.

In July, a US-Australian cybersecurity firm, Internet 2.0, published a report in which it said data collection on the app was “overly intrusive” and flagged a connection in the app to a server in mainland [China](#), run by Guizhou BaishanCloud Technology Co Ltd. The report said the data that TikTok can access on your phone includes device location, calendar, contacts and other running applications.

TikTok’s approach to data gathering is more aggressive than WeChat, the Chinese super app that performs multiple functions from messaging to ride-hailing, according to David Robinson, co-chief executive of Internet 2.0.

“In our opinion, based on detailed analysis, TikTok harvests much more data than WeChat. Their aggressive way of continuously requesting access to contacts after a user has decided not to share contacts is unusual,” he says.

But last year a study by the University of Toronto’s [Citizen Lab found](#) that the app did not exhibit “overtly malicious behavior” in terms of data collection and its use of advertising and user activity tracking software was “not exceptional when compared to industry norms”.

TikTok has disputed both the accusations that it collects more data than other social media companies, and that Chinese authorities could access data from its users.

TikTok says that its use of data is in line with industry practices and helps the app function properly and operate securely, as well as helping give users more of what they want. A spokesperson adds: “the TikTok app is not unique in the amount of information it collects”.

The company says its data is not held in China, but in the US – where US user data is routed through cloud infrastructure operated by US firm Oracle – and Singapore, and that it plans to start storing European user data in Ireland next year.

“Since beginning transparency reporting in 2019, we have received zero data requests from the Chinese government,” a TikTok spokesperson added.

The company has denied it is used to [“target” US citizens](#) in the wake of the Forbes report. In response to the BuzzFeed report, [Shanahan said](#) the company has talked openly about its efforts to limit employees’ access to US user data and the BuzzFeed News report shows TikTok is “doing what it said it was going to”.

Referring to the Chinese server claim by Internet 2.0, a TikTok spokesperson said the IP address cited in the report is in Singapore and the network traffic does not leave the region.

TikTok insists that the app is independent. “TikTok is an independent platform, with its own leadership team, including a CEO based in Singapore, a COO based in the US and a Global Head of Trust & Safety based in Ireland,” it says.

Woodward says that even if there is no evidence that TikTok is doing anything with user data other than what is being done by the other major social media platforms, the background presence of China will remain difficult to shake for sceptics.

“The Chinese government’s pervasive yet secretive approach to surveillance means that those who do not trust them do not believe the lack of evidence is proof they are not using data from TikTok.”

He says considerable doubt is generated by China’s National Intelligence Law of 2017, which states that all organisations and citizens shall “support, assist and cooperate” with national intelligence efforts.

Woodward says: “I am sure that many companies, and individuals, feel strongly that they would never provide data from their customers to the Chinese state but how could they resist: the law is absolute and the government are not shy about punishing those who fail to comply.”

“It’s less about TikTok and more about the Chinese Communist party,” said James Lewis, a senior vice-president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a US thinktank. “The CCP is unscrupulous and opportunistic when it comes to spying, so distrust is more than justified.”

“Social media pages are a great source of personal detail” for spy agencies, Lewis says, adding that intelligence is now a “big data” game.

For others, data is less of a concern than the platform’s potential for manipulation of opinion. Matt Schrader, an adviser on China at the International Republican Institute, a nonprofit organisation, says the data issue is a “sideshow”.

He adds: “It is far less of a concern for me than the issue of political manipulation on the platform. It is difficult to spot and there is limited evidence of its presence but it is a concern to me because the potential for front-running, widespread manipulation of political discourse by the authorities in Beijing who have zero compunctions about using social media in that way.”

As TikTok’s influence grows, and geopolitical tensions between the US and China remain, concerns about data and privacy are likely to stay.

HEADLINE	11/08 Twitter users leave for Mastodon?
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/nov/08/mastodon-what-is-it-how-do-i-join-use-find-best-server-list-change-elon-musk-twitter-leaving-social-network-alternative
GIST	<p>Interest in the open source social media platform known as Mastodon has spiked again as users look for an alternative to Twitter, should Elon Musk's takeover spell the end of that website as we know it.</p> <p>If you're fleeing the sinking ship of Twitter for the potential life raft of Mastodon – or wondering whether to – here's what you need to know.</p> <p>Welcome to the Fediverse</p> <p>The first thing to get your head around is that Mastodon is what's known as a “federated” network, a collection of thousands of social networks run on servers across the world that are linked by the common Mastodon technology, on a platform known as the “Fediverse”.</p> <p>You sign up for a specific server, which is run by whoever set it up, usually volunteers doing it out of their own pocket or taking donations through Patreon. They'll have their own rules and policies on, for example, who can join and how strictly the conversation will be moderated.</p> <p>You can even start your own server if you want to set the rules yourself. Otherwise, there's a list of servers which focus on specific locations or topics of interest. The servers on that list have all signed up to the “Mastodon covenant” which promises “active moderation against racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia”.</p> <p>Whichever Mastodon server(s) you sign up for, however, you can follow users on a different one with no problem.</p> <p>Oh, and as this is a volunteer-run system, there are no paid-for ads in your feed.</p> <p>Username are different</p> <p>Once you choose a username and set up your account with an image header and profile picture, you can begin. Unlike Twitter, your username will be @[username]@[the Mastodon instance you signed up to]. So for example, you could be @MuskyElon@aus.social. Think of it like an email address – the first part is your chosen identifier, the second part is the organisation that looks after your inbox.</p> <p>There are apps on iOS and Android which allow you to sign into your Mastodon account(s).</p> <p>Finding Twitter users is a chore</p> <p>If you want to track down on Mastodon all the people you follow on Twitter, unfortunately there's no easy way to do this.</p> <p>You could start searching for those you know, or go back to Twitter and see if they have announced their move. Services like Twitodon allow you to log in with both your Twitter and Mastodon accounts and scan to look for users you follow. But it will only be able to find those users who have also used Twitodon.</p> <p>Once you follow a few people you have found from Twitter, you could go through their lists to find others you might know.</p> <p>Posting is similar but different</p> <p>For a start, you may have to get used to your posts being called “toots” rather than “tweets”.</p> <p>On the plus side, you'll have almost twice as many characters (500) to write a post, and additional features such as click spoiler warnings for text and images.</p> <p>You will have more control over who can see your post, from being discoverable across the server, down to only those who you mention in the post – similar to a DM.</p>

	<p>Hashtags work similar to Twitter for trending topics, and you can share someone else's post with your followers by boosting it – which works the same as retweeting. But there's no such thing as "quote tooting".</p> <p>Verification is easy – and free</p> <p>There has been much drama on Twitter over Musk's move to require people to pay for verification, while at the same time not actually verifying they are who they say they are. Mastodon has a verification system that's available to everyone with their own website.</p> <p>If you link to a website you control on your profile, then it can recognise you as the owner of that website, which will give followers some justification in trusting you are who you claim to be.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 DOJ seizes \$1B in stolen bitcoin
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/nov/07/us-justice-department-seizes-bitcoin-theft
GIST	<p>The United States is seeking the forfeiture of more than \$1bn in bitcoin stolen from the Silk Road online marketplace, federal prosecutors in Manhattan said on Monday.</p> <p>In the second largest seizure in US Department of Justice history, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agents obtained the 50,000 bitcoins during a November 2021 search of the defendant James Zhong's home in Gainesville, Georgia.</p> <p>Zhong, 32, on Friday pleaded guilty to wire fraud for tricking Silk Road's processing system into releasing the funds to his accounts in 2012.</p> <p>By the time it was seized, the bitcoin was worth more than \$3bn. It has since lost about two-thirds of its value.</p> <p>Some of the stolen bitcoin was found on a computer in a popcorn tin stored in a bathroom closet, IRS special agent Trevor McAleenan said in an affidavit.</p> <p>"For almost 10 years, the whereabouts of this massive chunk of missing bitcoin had ballooned into an over \$3.3bn mystery," US attorney Damian Williams in Manhattan said in a statement. "We won't stop following the money ... even to a circuit board in the bottom of a popcorn tin."</p> <p>The US government seized Silk Road in 2013, describing the underground website as a massive illegal drug and money-laundering marketplace.</p> <p>Silk Road creator Ross Ulbricht was convicted in 2015 of seven counts of enabling illegal drug sales via bitcoin. He was sentenced to life in prison, and lost an appeal in 2017.</p> <p>Zhong could face more than two years in prison under recommended federal guidelines at his 22 February sentencing before US district judge Paul Gardephe, though prosecutors can seek a longer sentence.</p> <p>He's agreed to forfeit his stake in a real estate company, plus \$661,900 and other items.</p> <p>Zhong's lawyer Michael Bachner said his client has returned "virtually" all of the bitcoin.</p> <p>"Mr Zhong is extremely remorseful for his conduct that occurred over 10 years ago when he was just 22," Bachner said in a statement.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Tech industry facing unique struggles
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SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/nation-world/tech-industry-facing-unique-struggles-amid-wider-economic-stress-experts-say-amazon-facebook-google-microsoft-nasdaq-stocks-big-tech#
GIST	<p>(TND) — The technology sector's struggles can have an impact on the economy, but they aren't necessarily a harbinger of doom for other industries.</p> <p>The tech-heavy Nasdaq is down more than 30% for the year – a bigger drop than the Dow or S&P 500. In recent weeks, Amazon has implemented a hiring freeze. Microsoft reported a drop in profits. Google's parent company announced slower revenue growth.</p> <p>Inflation is high, and interest rates are up. Fears of a recession are affecting a lot of companies.</p> <p>But something else is happening within the tech industry, according to Colorado State University economist Stephan Weiler.</p> <p>Tech is becoming a “normal industry,” Weiler said.</p> <p>It's a confluence of factors affecting the tech sector. Along with the economic pressures other companies are facing, tech companies are facing market saturation and shifting consumer habits after the pandemic fueled demand for virtual services.</p> <p><i>“In other words, people who want to be on Meta are on Meta, people who have used Twitter are on Twitter, and so on,” Weiler said. “The growth that we’ve seen from those companies is basically petering out, as it does with almost all industries when they get saturated.”</i></p> <p>Investors tend to get excited about the potential they see in new technology, and they start to bid the valuations higher and higher for these companies as long as the economy stays strong and easy money is available, said Eric Burkholder, a chartered financial analyst in Tulsa, Oklahoma.</p> <p>“The pandemic exasperated this trend when even more money flowed into non-traditional businesses that didn't necessarily need to rely on in-person services,” Burkholder said via email. “Eventually, the market always overdoes it, and that is exactly what happened. Tech companies were trading ‘to perfection.’ They were at the highest relative valuations to other industries since the dot-com bubble in the early 2000s. It just was not sustainable without perfect market conditions. As we know, eventually the tide turns, and it did.”</p> <p>Weiler said venture capitalists are getting more cautious with tech companies because of the market saturation, saying “it’s no longer a free lunch in the Silicon Valley.”</p> <p>He said tech companies will need to find more profits from existing customers.</p> <p>And they’ll need to innovate.</p> <p>Apple’s biggest seller, for example, is the iPhone. It’s a product that’s constantly being updated, but it debuted 15 years ago.</p> <p>“Not everybody’s lining up to get the latest and greatest, because if you already spent \$1,000 two years ago do you really want to spend another \$1,000-plus two years later?” Weiler said.</p> <p>Some of these tech companies are giants, and Weiler said their pain can certainly lead to pain in the economy at large.</p> <p>Burkholder said hopefully the worst of the downturn stays isolated to the tech industry.</p> <p><i>“But contagion is always a danger,” Burkholder said. “If people start slowing their spending or companies slow investment because they are seeing the bloodbath in tech, it can be a self-fulfilling prophecy.”</i></p>

	<p>Burkholder said he thinks the wider economy and stock market will predominately be driven by economic growth and interest rates, not specifically what is happening within the tech industry.</p> <p>“Pullbacks hurt when they happen, but they are a healthy part of the investment lifecycle,” he said.</p> <p>Tech companies should refocus on profitable ideas and be smart about their finances, Burkholder said.</p> <p>“This pullback should wash out the malinvestment that comes with strong bull markets and easy money,” he said. “What will be left will be a much stronger industry. Only the best ideas will survive, which is what we need for a healthy tech industry.”</p>
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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	11/08 Military engaged in unauthorized wars?
SOURCE	https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/11/08/the-us-military-is-operating-in-more-countries-than-we-think/
GIST	<p>U.S. military forces have been engaged in unauthorized hostilities in many more countries than the Pentagon has disclosed to Congress, let alone the public, according to a major new report released late last week by New York University School of Law’s Brennan Center for Justice.</p> <p>“Afghanistan, Iraq, maybe Libya. If you asked the average American where the United States has been at war in the past two decades, you would likely get this short list,” according to the report, <i>Secret War: How the U.S. Uses Partnerships and Proxy Forces to Wage War Under the Radar</i>. “But this list is wrong – off by at least 17 countries in which the United States has engaged in armed conflict through ground forces, proxy forces, or air strikes.”</p> <p>“This proliferation of secret war is a relatively recent phenomenon, and it is undemocratic and dangerous,” the report’s author, Katherine Yon Ebright, wrote in the introduction. “The conduct of undisclosed hostilities in unreported countries contravenes our constitutional design. It invites military escalation that is unforeseeable to the public, to Congress, and even to the diplomats charged with managing U.S. foreign relations.”</p> <p>The 39-page report focuses on so-called “security cooperation” programs authorized by Congress pursuant to the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, or AUMF, against certain terrorist groups. One such program, known as Section 127e, authorized the Defense Department to “provide support to foreign forces, irregular forces, groups or individuals engaged in supporting or facilitating authorized ongoing military operations by United States special operations forces to combat terrorism.”</p> <p>According to the report, that “support” has been broadly — or, more accurately, too broadly — interpreted by the Pentagon. In practice, it has enabled the U.S. military to “develop and control proxy forces that fight on behalf of and sometimes alongside U.S. forces” and to use armed force to defend its local partners against adversaries (in what the Pentagon calls “collective self-defense”) regardless of whether those adversaries pose any threat to U.S. territory or persons, and, in some cases, whether or not the adversaries have been officially designated as legitimate targets under the 2001 AUMF.</p> <p>In Somalia in 2016, for example, U.S. forces invoked “collective self-defense” to launch a strike against a rival militia of the Puntland Security Force, an elite brigade that had originally been recruited, trained, and equipped by the CIA and subsequently taken over by the Pentagon in 2011.</p> <p>Moreover, the Pentagon deployed the PSF, which was largely independent of the Somali government, to fight al-Shabab and the Islamic State of Somalia, sometimes alongside U.S. forces, for several years before the executive branch officially designated both groups as legitimate targets.</p>

Similarly, in Cameroon, U.S. forces accompanying a partner force on an “advise and assist” mission ended up shooting and killing an adversary. The Pentagon has used a Section 127 program there to pursue leaders of Boko Haram, a terrorist group that has “never been publicly identified as an associated force of Al-Qaeda, and thus a lawful target, under the 2001 AUMF,” according to the report.

Congress rarely hears of these incidents because, according to the report, DOD insists they are too minor or “episodic” to rise to the level of “hostilities” that would trigger reporting requirements under the 1973 War Powers Resolution.

An exception, however, came in October 2017 when four U.S. soldiers were killed while participating in a “train and advise role” with Nigerian forces under a related “security cooperation” program known as Section 333, which was also enacted pursuant to the 2001 AUMF and authorizes the Pentagon to “train and equip” foreign forces anywhere in the world. The incident shocked lawmakers who were unaware that U.S. troops were operating in the field in Niger, let alone that Section 333 was being interpreted to permit U.S. forces to conduct operations with local partners.

“I’ve got guys in Kenya, Chad, Cameroon, Niger [and] Tunisia who are doing the same kind of things as the guys in Somalia, exposing themselves to the same kind of danger and not just on 127 echoes,” [bragged](#) Brigadier Gen. Donald Bolduc (ret.), who commanded U.S. special forces in Africa until 2017 and is currently running as a Republican for the U.S. Senate in New Hampshire. “We’ve had guys wounded in all the types of missions that we do.”

The report, which relies on published work by investigative reporters, interviews with knowledgeable officials and congressional staff, official documents and records, as well as the author’s legal analysis, identifies 13 countries with Section 127e programs in addition to Somalia and Cameroon. They include Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Niger, Nigeria, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. But it stressed that the list is almost certainly not exhaustive.

Fifty countries, from Mexico to Peru in the west to Indonesia and the Philippines (where U.S. forces are known to have taken part in combat operation) in the east, and covering 22 countries in North and sub-Saharan Africa alone (not to mention Ukraine) had Section 333 programs in place as of mid-2018, according to the report.

Perhaps even more dangerous than the Section 127e counterterrorism programs, according to the report, are security cooperation programs undertaken pursuant to Section 1202 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2018. Using language that mirrors Section 127e, that provision goes beyond the counterterrorism purposes of Section 1273e by authorizing “support” to partner forces “engaged in supporting or facilitating irregular warfare operations by the United States Special Operations Forces.”

“Irregular warfare” is defined by DOD as “competition ...short of traditional armed conflict” or “all-out war.” Pentagon officials have described Section 1202 as “a highly useful tool for enabling irregular warfare operations...to deter and defeat ...revisionist powers and rogue regimes.” They have also insisted that “irregular warfare is likely to be increasingly relied on as DOD begins to “prioritize great power competition.”

“Broadly speaking, the purpose of the [Section] 1202 authority is to take the department’s [Section] 127e approach of creating and controlling partner forces and wield it against countries like China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea,” according to the report. “Section 1202, in short, raises the same potential as § 127e for hostilities that Congress has not authorized, but with far graver consequences because the enemy could be a powerful, nuclear-armed state.”

Given the increased risks, simply repealing or reforming “outdated and overstretched AUMFs ...[is] insufficient,” the report concludes. “Congress should repeal or reform the Department of Defense’s security cooperation authorities. Until it does so, the nation will continue to be at war – without, in some cases, the consent or even knowledge of its people.”

HEADLINE	11/07 US designates ISIS cell in South Africa
SOURCE	https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1084
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated four members of an Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) cell operating in South Africa who have provided technical, financial, or material support to the terrorist group. Treasury also designated eight companies owned, controlled, or directed by the individuals in this ISIS cell. ISIS continues to expand its terrorist network across the continent, as evidenced by the July 2022 United Nations Security Council report that highlighted the emerging importance of the country for funds transfers from ISIS leadership to ISIS affiliates across Africa. Treasury remains committed to exposing and disrupting terrorist financing on the African continent.</p> <p>“Today, Treasury is targeting key individuals in ISIS’s network in South Africa, as well as their business assets, who have played pivotal roles in enabling terrorism and other criminal activities in the region,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “The United States, as part of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, will continue to partner with South Africa to deny ISIS the ability to exploit the country’s economy to raise and move funds to support the growth of ISIS affiliates and networks.”</p> <p>Treasury is designating these individuals and entities pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, as amended, which targets terrorist groups, their supporters, and associated assets.</p> <p>FARHAD HOOMER’S ASSOCIATES AND BUSINESSES</p> <p>The South Africa-based ISIS members designated today are associates of Treasury-designated ISIS cell leader Farhad Hooper, who continues to pursue ISIS’s objectives in southern Africa and express the will and intent to attack the interests of the United States and its allies.</p> <p>Brothers Nufael Akbar and Yunus Mohamad Akbar are senior members of a Durban, South Africa-based ISIS cell led by Farhad Hooper. Nufael Akbar has collaborated with and been directed by Hooper. Nufael Akbar is a central commanding figure in the Durban-based ISIS cell. Yunus Akbar functions as an enforcer and logistical coordinator for the ISIS cell.</p> <p>Today’s action also targets two other Hooper associates, Mohamad Akbar and Umar Akbar, who were arrested in 2018 by South African authorities along with Hooper for their involvement in a plan to deploy improvised incendiary devices near a mosque and commercial retail buildings.</p> <p>Nufael Akbar, Yunus Mohamad Akbar, Mohamad Akbar, and Umar Akbar are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, ISIS.</p> <p>OFAC is also designating four south Africa-based companies in connection with Nufael Akbar and Yunus Mohamad Akbar. MA Gold Traders (PTY) LTD is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for being owned, controlled, or directed by Nufael Akbar. Bailey Holdings (PTY) LTD and Flexoseal Waterproofing Solutions (PTY) LTD are being designated, pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for being owned, controlled, or directed by Yunus Mohamad Akbar. HJ Bannister Construction CC is being designated today, pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for being jointly owned, controlled, or directed by Nufael Akbar and Yunus Mohamad Akbar.</p> <p>Additionally, Treasury is designating, pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, four South Africa-based companies for being owned, controlled, or directed by Farhad Hooper: Sultans Construction CC, Ashiq Jewellers CC, Ineos Trading (PTY) LTD, and Shaahista Shoes CC.</p> <p>SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>As a result of today’s action, all property and interests in property of the individuals and entities named above, and of any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by them, individually, or with other blocked persons, that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons</p>

	<p>must be blocked and reported to OFAC. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC or otherwise exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within the United States, including transactions transiting the United States, that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons.</p> <p>Furthermore, engaging in certain transactions with the individuals and entities designated today entails risk of secondary sanctions pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended. Pursuant to this authority, OFAC can prohibit or impose strict conditions on the opening or maintaining in the United States of a correspondent account or a payable-through account of a foreign financial institution that knowingly conducted or facilitated any significant transaction on behalf of a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.</p> <p>The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from its ability to designate and add persons to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List), but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to OFAC's Frequently Asked Question 897. For detailed information on the process to submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list, please refer to OFAC's website.</p>
Return to Top	View identifying information on the individuals and entities designated today.

HEADLINE	11/07 Most UK far-right attacks now by older men
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/nov/07/uk-terrorism-reviewer-says-most-far-right-attacks-now-by-older-men
GIST	<p>Older men are now the main perpetrators of extreme rightwing terrorist attacks, the UK's independent reviewer of terrorism has said, after the firebomb attack on an immigration centre.</p> <p>Jonathan Hall KC's observation came as Rishi Sunak said tackling Channel crossings by people seeking asylum was his "key priority".</p> <p>In his first comments since the attack by Andrew Leak, 66, who is believed to have thrown three incendiary devices at a Dover migration centre before killing himself, Hall wrote that it was "consistent with a recent pattern. That is, the most recent completed Extreme Right Wing Terrorist [ERWT] attacks all being carried out by older men".</p> <p>In a Twitter thread on Monday, Hall pointed out that the attempted murder of Dimitar Mihaylov, 19, in Stanwell, Surrey, was carried out by Vincent Fuller, 50; the Exeter Synagogue arson attack of 2018 was carried out by Tristan Morgan, 51; the 2017 Finsbury Park murder of Makram Ali was carried out by Darren Osborne, 48; while Thomas McNair, 52, was found guilty of the 2016 murder of the Labour MP Jo Cox.</p> <p>He said the last rightwing terrorist attack by a younger man was in 2015, when Zack Davies, 25, tried to kill a shopper in a branch of Tesco in Mold, Wales.</p> <p>"There <i>*are*</i> more recent ERWT plots by younger (sometimes much younger) people, but for some reason do not lead to completed attacks," he wrote.</p> <p>"There are various possible explanations: more likely to give away their plans, leading to detection and frustration; less capable; lack of intent to go through with attack; lack of access to ideal weapons."</p> <p>The prime minister plans to press Emmanuel Macron for a new deal to curb Channel crossings, reports have claimed.</p> <p>Sunak and the French president were expected to discuss the issue at the UN climate change conference in Egypt on Monday.</p>

Sunak wants to agree on targets for stopping boats and a minimum number of French officers patrolling beaches. The government also hopes Border Force officers can be deployed to French beaches, but this has been resisted by French authorities.

Sunak told the Sun newspaper: "I have spent more time working on that in the last few days than anything else other than the autumn statement.

"We have to get a grip, do a range of things to stop it from happening, return people who shouldn't be here in the first place."

During a visit to Imperial College London, the Labour leader, Sir Keir Starmer, urged Sunak to discuss how to "work upstream" to bring down the people smugglers behind the crossings.

Almost 40,000 people have arrived in the UK after crossing the Channel in small boats so far this year. But there were no crossings in the first six days of November amid bad weather conditions, meaning the provisional total for 2022 to date still stands at 39,913.

In a further development, the government hopes to revive plans for a bill of rights to overhaul human rights laws as part of its plans to address the migration crisis.

Dominic Raab's proposals, which aim to give UK courts supremacy over the European court of human rights, will return to parliament "in the coming weeks" after being shelved by Liz Truss's administration, although they are expected to face opposition in the Commons and the Lords.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Somalia telecom center, tower destroyed
SOURCE	https://www.voanews.com/a/somali-telecommunications-center-tower-destroyed-in-explosion/6824753.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Somalia's largest telecommunications company, Hormuud Telecom, says one of its centers and a telecommunications tower have been destroyed in an explosion in Qaayib, a village in the Galmudug state of Somalia.</p> <p>The company said a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) destroyed the center and tower on Monday.</p> <p>"It's with great sadness to inform our customers that a VBIED attack destroyed our site in Qaayib, a village in Galgudud region today," the company said in a tweet. Galgudud is a region within the larger Galmudug State.</p> <p>The company said thousands of residents have lost access to its mobile money platform known as Electronic Voucher Card, or EVC Plus, a widely used payment form in a country where bank notes are disappearing.</p> <p>"Almost 14,000 people lost access to the company's services including EVC Plus, the only payment method in the area," Hormuud Telecom tweeted.</p> <p>It vowed to rebuild the center and restore telecommunication services in the area.</p> <p>On Monday, al-Shabab's military wing said in a statement published by one of the websites used by the group that it had attacked government forces in Qaayib that morning. The statement also said the attack started with a suicide bombing that was followed by an armed infantry attack on the military camp. The group claimed it killed 37 people, including three officers, a figure that has not been independently verified.</p> <p>Somali government officials confirmed that the militants used a truck bomb, adding that troops defeated the militants who attacked the Qaayib base.</p>

Major Mohamed Farah, a military officer in the nearby town of Bahdo, told Reuters that 10 soldiers and 20 al-Shabab militants were killed in the fighting.

Galmudug state Information Minister Ahmed Shire Falagle told VOA Somali that the militants lost Qaayib a week ago and wanted to retake it but were "chased away."

Falagle said civilians and nomads have been hurt in the attack, but he did not specify casualty figures.

In Galmudug and neighboring Hirshabelle state, residents have been accusing al-Shabab of destroying wells and telecommunication centers as punishment for supporting the ongoing government offensive against the militants.

The militant group has been trying for more than 15 years to topple the internationally recognized Somali government. The current government said it is exercising a new strategy to fight the group militarily as well as economically. In addition to the military offensive in conjunction with local militias, the government has been pressuring local businesses to stop extortion payments to al-Shabab, which helps fund their attacks.

And in an apparent spiritual war against al-Shabab, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowment this week issued a directive instructing that al-Shabab should not be called anything other than "Khawarij," a term that essentially means "deviant sect."

The ministry also banned religious scholars from having any dealings with the group.

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HEADLINE	11/08 New Zealand mosque shooter appeals
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/religion-shootings-new-zealand-race-and-ethnicity-racial-injustice-f815faab23eab0d363cb8bef9f85d0dd
GIST	<p>WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — The man who slaughtered 51 Muslim worshippers during the deadliest mass-shooting in New Zealand’s history is appealing his conviction and sentence.</p> <p>New Zealand’s Court of Appeal confirmed Tuesday that gunman Brenton Tarrant had filed the appeal last week. The court said a hearing date has yet to be set.</p> <p>Tarrant, a white supremacist, gunned down worshippers at two Christchurch mosques during Friday prayers in March 2019. He left dozens of others with severe injuries in the attack, which he livestreamed on Facebook.</p> <p>The following year, Tarrant pleaded guilty to 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one count of terrorism. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole, the maximum available sentence in New Zealand.</p> <p>The details of his appeal were not immediately made available by the court.</p> <p>But in previous court documents, Tarrant, 32, claimed he was subject to “inhuman or degrading treatment” while being held for months in solitary confinement after the shooting, preventing a fair trial. He said he only pleaded guilty under duress.</p> <p>Tarrant fired one of his lawyers in 2021, and it wasn’t immediately clear if another lawyer was representing him in his appeal or if he was representing himself.</p> <p>Temel Atacocugu, who survived after being shot nine times during the attack at the Al Noor mosque, told news outlet Stuff that the gunman was playing games and seeking attention by filing the appeal.</p>

“I would like to tell him: ‘Grow up, be a man and die quietly in jail, because that is what you deserve,’” Atacocugu said.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said she’d made a pledge a long time ago not to publicly say the terrorist’s name.

“His is a story that should not be told and his is a name that should not be repeated and I am going to apply that same rule in commenting on his attempts to revictimize people,” Ardern said. “We should give him nothing.”

The attacks prompted New Zealand to quickly pass new laws which banned the deadliest types of semi-automatic weapons. In a subsequent buyback scheme, gun owners handed over more than 50,000 weapons to police. The attacks also prompted global changes to social media, as tech companies sought to prevent or quickly stop future attacks from being livestreamed.

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HEADLINE	11/06 Nigeria military kill 2 IS kingpins in raid
SOURCE	https://dailynigerian.com/military-rockets-kill-top/
GIST	<p>Two top terror kingpins of the Islamic State of West African Province, ISWAP, Ali Kwaya and Bukar Mainoka, have been eliminated by the Nigerian military, PRNigeria reports.</p> <p>They were killed in a raid by Nigerian military fighter jets at Lake Chad on Saturday, PRNigeria gathered.</p> <p>Messrs Kwaya and Mainoka, who were also key members of the ISWAP Shura (Consultation) Council met their Waterloo when the Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai conducted air interdiction missions at Belowa, one of the very few remaining ISWAP/Boko Haram enclaves in the Tumbuns, Lake Chad Region in Abadam Local Government.</p> <p>PRNigeria gathered from a military intelligence operative that their airstrikes at Belowa became necessary after intelligence revealed the convergence of some ISWAP leaders and fighters from surrounding areas for a meeting with the motive of planning attacks on friendly forces.</p> <p>According to the operative, who asked not to be named, their Nigerian Air Force, NAF fighter aircraft dispatched to the location of the terrorists’ meeting at Belowa, engaged the ISWAP elements with rockets and bombs in multiple passes.</p> <p>“An hour after the strikes, 2 vehicles conveying about 13 injured terrorists to another hideout were struck through precision strikes by NAF aircraft.</p> <p>“Feedback after the strikes revealed that ISWAP kingpin, Mallam Ali Kwaya who is a key member of the ISWAP Shura Council and Mallam Bukar Mainoka were among those neutralized in the strikes,” he said.</p> <p>Similar strikes, the military intelligence operative said, were also conducted on Friday at Ngwuri Gana in Bama LGA, a location East of Maiduguri.</p> <p>He said: “The strikes became expedient sequel to intelligence that a group of ISWAP insurgents in 15 trucks was spotted converging on the location.</p> <p>“Feedback revealed the strike was on point as several terrorists were neutralized and all their structures and vehicles engulfed in fire”.</p> <p>When contacted, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, NAF spokesperson, confirmed the strikes but did not disclosed the names of those killed.</p> <p>He however said, “Our path to victory in the Northeast and northwest remains on course and we won’t relent until all locations are free of terrorists and insurgents.</p>

“Let’s also not forget that the resilience of our pilots and technicians is in line with the directive of the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Amao that terrorists and insurgents must be denied their hiding places.”

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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	11/07 Climate change report card for the world
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/11/07/cop27-climate-pledges-methane-deforestation/
GIST	<p>Last year’s United Nations climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, had the same optimistic energy as the first day of a new school year. The United States — a truant since the nation withdrew from the Paris agreement under President Donald Trump — was back at the table. The cool kids (Leonardo DiCaprio, Prince William, Greta Thunberg) brushed shoulders with the nerds (everyone else). A parade of presidents and prime ministers pledged renewed climate efforts with all the fervor of students promising their parents that this semester would be different.</p> <p>But that back-to-school energy never lasts. Some of the splashiest COP26 pledges have been derailed by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and upheavals in the global economy. Catastrophic climate disasters hampered countries’ abilities to invest in renewable energy and resilient infrastructure, even as they exposed the urgency of preparing for a warmer world.</p> <p>There are also some glimmers of hope on the horizon: The United States finally passed significant climate legislation to speed the transition away from fossil fuels. Global renewable energy investments are starting to outpace fossil fuel spending.</p> <p>But climate change doesn’t grade on a curve.</p> <p>As leaders head to Egypt for another climate summit, The Washington Post worked with experts to craft a report card for the world. It reveals the areas where nations have made some progress, as well as the ways in which we’re dangerously close to failure.</p> <p>Updating climate pledges: F</p> <p>One of the main outcomes of the Glasgow conference was a call for countries to arrive in Egypt this year with stronger emissions-cutting commitments, known in United Nations lingo as “Nationally Determined Contributions,” or NDCs.</p> <p>But according to the independent research group Climate Action Tracker, only one large emitter — Australia — has submitted a substantially more ambitious NDC this year. Before giving the country too much credit, it’s worth noting that Australia’s climate targets hadn’t previously been updated since the Paris agreement in 2015.</p> <p>“Australia only did the homework of last year, but not this year’s,” said climate scientist Niklas Höhne, whose NewClimate Institute created the tracker.</p> <p>India, Brazil and Egypt have also made new proposals, but Climate Action Tracker found that those are no more ambitious than their previous targets.</p> <p>According to the latest U.N. emissions gap report, the current national commitments put the world on track to warm between 2.4 and 2.6 degrees Celsius (4.3 and 4.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century. Scientists say this would lead to a hellish future marked by unbearable heat, escalating disasters and widespread hunger and disease.</p>

Top of the class: No one

According to Climate Action Tracker, not a single major polluter has adopted an NDC compatible with the most ambitious goal of the Paris climate agreement: limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels.

Underachievers: Russia

The world's fifth-biggest greenhouse-gas emitter has not offered a meaningful update to its NDC since 2015. Climate Action Tracker rates the nation's pledge as "critically insufficient."

The missing \$100 billion: C-

The Glasgow pact demanded that wealthy nations "make significant progress" to fulfill an overdue promise to provide at least \$100 billion per year in financial aid to developing countries as they cope with the devastating effects of climate change. Importantly, these funds are supposed to be "new and additional" to nations' existing aid budgets — ensuring that support for climate doesn't take away from education, public health and other development concerns.

Two years after the initial deadline, the industrialized world is still falling short, according to a [progress report](#) published by the governments of Germany and Canada. There have been some new funding announcements this year — an additional \$2 billion per year from Japan, along with a new climate investment fund from Norway. But the promised \$100 billion won't be delivered before 2023, the report said.

Rich countries have also been criticized for [spending too much of their money overseas on curbing emissions](#), rather than helping vulnerable nations adapt to changes that are already wreaking havoc. Because adaptation measures such as sea walls and drought readiness are potentially less profitable than wind farms and solar panels, they don't attract as much private investment — making communities especially dependent on public funds. In Glasgow, rich nations committed to double funding for adaptation by 2025.

Some 11 countries and the European Commission have committed to spend at least half of their climate finance on adaptation. President Biden has [vowed to significantly increase](#) the United States' funding for adaptation.

But several major development banks have yet to announce any plans on this topic. And leaders from low-income countries remain concerned that too much finance is coming in the form of loans, rather than grants — leaving them and their descendants to deal with long-term debt as they confront an increasingly dangerous climate that they did little to create.

Top of the class: Norway

According to a [June report from the humanitarian agency CARE International](#), the Scandinavian nation is the largest per capita supplier of climate finance, and one of just three wealthy countries to make good on the promise of providing "new and additional" funds. Norway has [committed](#) to doubling the amount of climate finance it provides by 2026.

Underachievers: The United States

Despite being the richest country in the world, the United States has provided less climate finance per capita than any other wealthy nation, according to the [CARE report](#). Congress this year appropriated \$1 billion to help developing countries deal with climate change — just a fraction of the \$11.4 billion Biden promised at last year's COP.

Curbing methane: C+

In addition to the main "Glasgow climate pact" — which all 193 countries had to agree on — COP26 produced several side pledges, or voluntary commitments made by smaller groups of countries. The biggest was the [Global Methane Pledge](#), an initiative spearheaded by the United States and the United Kingdom to reduce emissions of the potent greenhouse gas by 30 percent by 2030.

Experts say that tackling methane, which mostly comes from fossil fuel facilities, landfills and livestock, can stave off short-term warming while the world transitions to a cleaner economy.

This year, several countries adopted policies to curb the pollutant. The United States passed its first-ever charge on methane as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, and the Environmental Protection Agency is expected to strengthen its proposed rule clamping down on these emissions from oil and gas operations. [Signs of progress](#) are also coming from the European Union, Nigeria and Colombia, among other nations, said Antoine Halff, co-founder of the satellite analysis firm Kayrros. And many signatories to the methane pledge are expected to publish their plans for following through at the meeting in Egypt.

At the same time, the International Energy Agency [warns](#) that actual methane emissions are 70 percent higher than what countries are reporting. And [new research from the World Meteorological Organization](#) shows that atmospheric concentrations of the gas are rising faster than ever. Scientists say the increases bear a chemical fingerprint of coming from biological sources, such as burping cattle or decomposing wetlands. This could be evidence of a “climate feedback” in which rising temperatures cause ecosystems to release more methane, which then fuels even greater temperature rise.

Top of the class: The United States

Halff said the United States’ new charge on methane is the most potentially powerful of the policies announced so far. By 2026, oil and gas companies will be required to pay up to \$1,500 for each metric ton of methane they release beyond a certain threshold, and the analysis group Energy Innovation [estimates](#) that it will cut the equivalent of 29 million metric tons of carbon dioxide by 2030. However, loopholes in the law mean that won’t be as effective without stronger regulations from the EPA.

Underachievers: China

The world’s largest methane producer has not signed on to the Global Methane Pledge. Nor has China released the “ambitious plan” to cut methane that it promised in a [joint announcement](#) with the United States at last year’s climate talks.

Reversing deforestation: D-

More than 100 nations representing over 85 percent of the world’s forests — including Brazil, Canada, Norway, Indonesia and the United States — pledged to halt and reverse deforestation by the end of the decade. Natural ecosystems like forests are critical for sucking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, but almost a quarter of all greenhouse gas pollution currently comes from farming, forestry and other land uses.

Achieving this goal would require nations to curb deforestation by 10 percent each year — a target the world is [nowhere close to meeting](#). A recent assessment [found](#) that global forest losses have exceeded the gains from replanting efforts the last two years. Meanwhile, the first half of this year saw record deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon.

The [degradation of primary forests](#) — ecosystems that have never been cut down — is especially worrying, said Wayne Walker, carbon program director at the Woodwell Climate Research Center. That’s because existing old-growth forests store huge amounts of carbon, as well as serve as habitat for animals, clean the air and water, prevent erosion and provide medicine and food for people. Protecting these trees will always be the more “climate-smart option,” compared with trying to reforest a degraded landscape.

Top of the class: Indonesia

While other forests see worrying declines, tropical Asia is the only region on track to halt deforestation by the end of the decade. At the head of the pack is Indonesia, which curbed forest loss by 25 percent from 2020 to 2021 and has reduced deforestation each of the past five years.

Underachievers: Brazil

Under outgoing president Jair Bolsonaro, who campaigned for president on promises to [open up the Amazon to business](#), rates of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon have reached [record highs](#). Satellite

images reveal the ecosystem has shrunk by about 17 percent, and parts of the forest now emit more carbon dioxide than they absorb.

But the incoming president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, has pledged to “fight for zero deforestation.” To the extent that he can [boost enforcement](#) and deliver on that promise, Brazil may be able to protect one of the most valuable rainforests on Earth.

Public finance promises: C

Nearly three dozen countries pledged to end public financial support — such as development aid, loans and export subsidies — for fossil fuel projects in other countries. According to the nonprofit Oil Change International, this promise would [directly shift \\$28 billion a year](#) out of oil, gas and other fossil fuels — if countries stick to it.

To some degree, they have. Despite fears that the energy crisis sparked by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine would [send nations scurrying for additional oil and gas](#), the majority of signatories have published policies that will end overseas fossil fuel financing by the end of this year, according to [Oil Change International](#). The latest World Energy Outlook published by the International Energy Agency shows that total investments in renewable energy this year have outstripped global spending on fossil fuels.

Top of the class: The United Kingdom

Britain excludes all finance for both overseas oil and gas projects, setting it apart from other industrialized nations. Only seven of the 17 major financing nations who signed an agreement in Glasgow to end all support for international fossil fuel projects by the end of 2022 have published policies ruling out this kind of financing. In addition to the U.K., that group includes Denmark, Sweden, the European Investment Bank, France, Belgium and Finland.

Underachievers: Canada

Canada ranks as one of the top public funders of international fossil fuel development, according to Oil Change International. Between 2019 and 2021, it provided an average of \$8.5 billion annually, the group reports, with most of that money supporting oil and gas projects. Export credit agency Export Development Canada has said that ending “new direct financing to international fossil fuel companies and projects by the end of 2022” will meet the goals of the agreement in Glasgow. But that would still allow the government to give money to its own fossil fuel firms, which finance many of these operations overseas.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Climate change ‘far-reaching, worsening’
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/11/07/cop27-climate-change-report-us/
GIST	<p>Climate change is unleashing “far-reaching and worsening” calamities in every region of the United States, and the economic and human toll will only increase unless humans move faster to slow the planet’s warming, according to a sprawling new federal report released Monday.</p> <p>“The things Americans value most are at risk,” the National Climate Assessment authors, who represent a broad range of federal agencies, write in the draft report. “Many of the harmful impacts that people across the country are already experiencing will worsen as warming increases, and new risks will emerge.”</p> <p>The congressionally mandated assessment, last issued under the Trump administration in 2018, comes as world leaders gather this week in Egypt for a U.N. Climate Change Conference, known as COP27, aimed at prodding nations to tackle the problem with more urgency.</p> <p>The report’s authors detail how climate-fueled disasters are becoming more costly and more common, and how the science is more clear than ever that rapid cuts in greenhouse gas emissions are needed to slow the profound changes that are underway.</p>

The draft report, which probably will be finalized next year after a period of public comment and peer review, finds that in a world that has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels, the situation in the United States is even more extreme.

“Over the past 50 years, the U.S. has warmed 68 percent faster than the planet as a whole,” the report finds, noting that the change reflects a broader global pattern in which land areas warm faster than the ocean, and higher latitudes warm more rapidly than lower latitudes.

Since 1970, the authors state, the continental United States has experienced 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit of warming, well above the average for the planet.

“The United States — exclusive of Alaska — is warming about two-thirds faster than the planet as a whole,” said Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist at Berkeley Earth.

That shift means significant parts of the country now must grapple with growing threats to [safe drinking water](#), housing security and infrastructure. A hotter atmosphere creates a litany of health hazards, makes farming and fishing more difficult and unpredictable, and [imperils key ecosystems](#).

“There is no known precedent for a species changing its own climate as quickly as we are changing ours, and there are many uncertainties associated with a rapidly warming world,” the document states.

Scientists have documented with increased clarity how human-caused emissions are heating the planet. But Monday’s assessment underscores how those changes are deepening impacts on the health and pocketbooks of average Americans.

John Podesta, senior adviser to President Biden on climate change, said the report “underscores that Americans in every region of the country and every sector of the economy face real and sobering climate impacts.”

The study highlights how the frequency of billion-dollar disasters has now [increased](#) from once every four months in the 1980s to once every three weeks in the present. It finds that the United States is experiencing some of the most severe sea-level rise on the planet.

And it details the ever greater certainty that rainfall and heat extremes are proliferating, as are damaging wildfires and crippling floods.

“Substantively, I think the report does a remarkably good job of connecting the dots between climate change and the things that really matter to folks,” said Kim Cobb, a climate scientist at Brown University. “The economy, jobs, justice. These things are what people need to be reading about to be understanding how these physical impacts are going to change our lives.”

In the short term, the assessment finds, communities must do more to adapt to the changes that already are here — and some are doing just that. But over the long term, the only real solution is for humanity to muster the political and technological will to stop polluting the atmosphere.

“We’re past the point of incremental changes,” Cobb said. “That era has passed us by, and the magnitude of the challenges we’re facing right now going forward are going to require transformative changes.”

Below are some central takeaways from Monday’s report, including what scientists say must happen for the United States to help shape a less costly, more livable future.

1-Every part of the U.S. is grappling with climate change — but not equally

From [stifling heat waves](#) in the Midwest to deadly floods in the Southeast, from warming oceans along the Northeast coast to [raging wildfires](#) in the West, “people across the country are facing increasing risks from climate change,” the assessment finds.

Further, given the warming that is already unavoidable, those kinds of catastrophes are likely to grow in coming years even if greenhouse gas emissions fall sharply.

But the impacts of such disasters are hardly uniform. If anything, they exacerbate inequality.

“The effects of climate change are felt most strongly by communities that are [already overburdened](#), including Indigenous peoples, people of color and low-income communities,” the report finds. “These frontline communities experience harmful climate impacts first and worst, yet are often the least responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.”

2-A warming world threatens reliable water supplies

The government’s assessment argues that even amid more extreme rainfall and flooding events in many regions, there will be less reliable drinking water for millions of people.

That’s because saltwater is invading aquifers as seas rise, floods spread agricultural nutrients that pollute wells and other sources of drinking water, and lakes face a growing threat of harmful algal blooms.

While some areas struggle with deluges, others are stricken by drought.

Between 1980 and 2021, the report finds, drought and related heat waves around the country caused nearly \$300 billion in damage. In recent years, droughts have caused [water supplies to wither](#), reduced agricultural productivity and severely reduced water levels in major reservoirs.

“What the climate assessment does is that it brings it home and talks about what is already happening today and how climate change is making our food, water and infrastructure worse,” said Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist at the Nature Conservancy and a professor at Texas Tech University.

“Droughts are projected to increase in intensity, duration and frequency, mostly in the Southwest, with implications for surface water and groundwater supplies,” the authors write.

3-Extreme events are wreaking havoc on homes and property

As climate research has advanced, the connection between persistent warming and damaging real-world effects has become clearer. Monday’s report details how a number of costly, deadly disasters are attributable at least in part to human-caused warming, including [Hurricane Harvey](#) in 2017 and a Pacific Northwest [heat wave](#) in June 2021 that killed 229 people.

The authors also detail how the nation has experienced more frequent billion-dollar weather and climate disasters. In 2021, the U.S. government tracked [20 such disasters](#) — a collection of [calamities](#) that cost the nation an estimated \$145 billion and killed nearly 700 people.

The United States has experienced an average of 7.7 billion-dollar disasters annually over the past four decades. But in the past five years, that average has jumped to nearly 18 events each year, or about one every several weeks.

Those disasters also don’t hit all Americans equally.

Homes with poor insulation or inefficient cooling can make it harder for low-income residents to heat or cool their homes. [Redlining policies](#) that long ago forced minority residents into less valuable neighborhoods now mean such communities are less likely to have adequate tree cover or access to green space.

These and other factors mean that a hotter climate and the extreme weather it fuels most negatively affect those who are least able to deal with the consequences.

4-The U.S. can expect more forced migration and displacement

Already, the authors of Monday's report said, major storms such as [Hurricane Maria](#), as well as extended droughts that [strained lives and livelihoods](#), have led people to leave their homes in search of more-stable places.

In the hotter world that lies ahead, they write, additional climate impacts — along with other factors such as the [housing market](#), job trends and pandemics — are expected to increasingly influence migration patterns.

“More severe wildfires in California, sea level rise in Florida, and more frequent flooding in Texas are expected to displace millions of people, while climate-driven economic changes abroad continue to increase the rate of emigration to the United States,” the report finds.

Such shifts are inherently complicated and fraught.

Several Indigenous tribes in coastal regions, facing fast-rising seas, have already sought [government help to relocate](#), but have struggled to do so without significant hurdles.

“Forced migrations and displacements disrupt social networks, decrease housing security, and exacerbate grief, anxiety and mental health outcomes,” the authors write.

5-Climate change is a growing public health threat

From vampire bats spreading more rabies in Texas and Florida, to the growing spread of Lyme disease because of the booming tick populations, to more spreading of dengue, Zika and chikungunya disease by mosquitoes, the human health impacts of climate change are sweeping.

Monday's report said scientists have “very high confidence” that “climate-related hazards will continue to grow, increasing morbidity and mortality across all regions of the United States.”

More extreme heat events, more communities forced to inhale [toxic wildfire smoke](#), warmer temperatures that increase the transmission of diseases and other factors are exposing ever more Americans to the health risks posed by a warming atmosphere.

“While climate change harms everyone's health, impacts exacerbate long-standing disparities that result in inequitable outcomes for historically marginalized people,” the report states.

But it also finds sharply reducing greenhouse gas emissions “would result in widespread health benefits and avoided death or illness that far outweigh the costs.”

6-It's not just humans who are feeling the effects

Across the United States, the authors write, rising land and water temperatures are shrinking the habitats for wildlife and driving the migration of plant, bird and fish species northward or to higher elevations.

Hurricanes and storm surges are battering mangrove forests and wetlands that historically safeguard coastal communities. Wildfires supercharge threats to the water quality of lakes and streams. Marine heat waves stress the coral reefs and sea grass that support key fish populations.

“Ecosystems are having to adapt faster by an order of magnitude faster than they did in the last warming they experienced,” Hayhoe said, and that's affecting the timing of when plants bloom and when their leaves are changing.

These biodiversity threats, too, could grow more dire without concerted action.

“Without emissions reductions, drastic changes to [ecosystems](#) are expected to pass a tipping point by mid-to late century,” the authors write, “where rapid shifts in environmental conditions lead to irreversible ecological transformations.”

7-There is good news and opportunity to still shape the future

Hausfather said the report shows some signs of hope going forward.

“Once we get global emissions to zero or net zero we expect warming to stop,” he said. “It doesn’t mean it cools down but that we don’t have as much.”

He cautioned, however, that “some climate change impacts — like sea-level rise — will continue for millennia to come even after temperatures stabilize.”

The assessment also shows how innovation is reducing greenhouse gases and how adaptation is helping communities gird themselves for rising sea levels.

“Fifteen years ago, it was really hard to find examples of people who were actually adapting and building resilience,” Hayhoe said. “But today it is happening all around us.”

Near-term actions such as ramping up public transit and incentivizing electric vehicles and energy efficiency can have tangible benefits. But, the report’s authors write, it is long-term planning and transformational investments that offer “the opportunity to create a healthier, more just, and more resilient nation.”

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HEADLINE	11/07 National Park Service warns: no toad licking
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/07/toad-licking-us-national-park-hallucinogen
GIST	<p>The US National Park Service is warning people to stop licking one of the largest toads in America, due to a toxin it secretes from its glands that can create a hallucinogenic experience.</p> <p>The Sonoran desert toad, which emits a quick, “weak low-pitched toot”, can make someone sick if they touch it or lick it, NPS said in a Facebook post on Tuesday.</p> <p>Toad-licking, however, has become a way to get high, and has long been considered life-threatening. Not every toad can induce a high, and for those that can, the high they deliver varies from toad to toad.</p> <p>Users often get high from either licking the back of a toad directly or by storing toxins secreted by the toad to use later.</p> <p>Hallucinations and euphoria are the known effects of this activity, but it can also cause anxiety, nausea or seizures and, in some cases, death. And the park service would definitely prefer if people stopped doing it.</p> <p>“As we say with most things you come across in a national park, whether it be a banana slug, unfamiliar mushroom, or a large toad with glowing eyes in the dead of night, please refrain from licking,” read a part of the post, which was accompanied by a sensor camera photo of a toad at the Organ Pipe Cactus national monument, Arizona.</p> <p>The toad, which is also referred to as the Colorado river toad, is about seven inches long, and its toxins are released from glands near its eyes and jaw.</p> <p>“Animals that harass this species generally are intoxicated through the mouth, nose, or eyes,” according to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, with a special warning for dog owners to keep their dogs safe.</p> <p>While the secretions of such toads can sometimes be used medically for the treatment of irregular heartbeats, it is done in a contained environment with strict monitoring.</p> <p>The licking trend is also not good for toads themselves. While the act of being licked doesn’t directly kill them, their skin may be sold for their secretions, which makes them susceptible to being killed. The toad is considered “endangered” in California and “threatened” in New Mexico.</p>

HEADLINE	11/07 'Terminal' loss Arctic sea ice in summers?
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/07/melting-arctic-sea-ice-summer-report
GIST	<p>The climate crisis has pushed the planet's stores of ice to a widespread collapse that was "unthinkable just a decade ago", with Arctic sea ice certain to vanish in summers and ruinous sea level rise from melting glaciers now already in motion, a major new report has warned.</p> <p>Even if planet-heating emissions are radically cut, the world's vast ice sheets at the poles will continue to melt away for hundreds of years, causing up to three metres of sea level rise that will imperil coastal cities, the report states. The "terminal" loss of sea ice from the Arctic during summers could arrive within a decade and now cannot be avoided, it adds.</p> <p>"There's nothing we can do about that now. We've just screwed up and let the system warm too much already," said Julie Brigham-Grette, a scientist at University of Massachusetts Amherst and report co-author, about the sea ice.</p> <p>"That milestone has now passed so the next thing we need to avoid is ice shelf collapses in Antarctica and the further breakdown of the ice systems in Greenland. We can't stuff the genie back into the bottle once they are gone."</p> <p>Disappearance of sea ice will open up the dark Arctic ocean, which will absorb – rather than reflect – heat, causing global heating to escalate further. It will also upend the region's ecosystem, harming everything from algae to large animals such as seals and polar bears that need the sea ice for hunting.</p> <p>"It's a terminal diagnosis and now we have to live with consequences," said Robbie Mallett, a sea ice expert at University College London Earth Sciences. "It's been quite emotional to think of a time by the end of my career when I will see an Arctic free of sea ice. It's been a shocking few years in Greenland with ice disappearing before our eyes. We are driving a whole environment to extinction."</p> <p>The loss of Arctic sea ice is "not the only sign of growing cryosphere collapse", according to the State of the Cryosphere report, which has been released by a group of scientists at the start of the United Nations' Cop27 climate talks in Egypt.</p> <p>In just the past year, researchers have been astonished by the sight of rain at the summit of Greenland's enormous ice sheet for the first time on record, followed by rain, rather than snow, falling on east Antarctica in March amid startling heatwaves at both poles, with temperatures 40C (72F) above normal.</p> <p>The report documents shell damage to crustaceans in the Arctic Ocean, a sign that the seawater is acidifying due to greenhouse gas emissions, the loss of 5% of glacier ice in the Alps over a single summer and a record low sea ice extent around Antarctica, earlier this year.</p> <p>A huge amount of sea level rise appears to be already locked in due to the rampant burning of fossil fuels, the report states, with sections of the west Antarctic ice sheet potentially collapsing even without any further emissions over the coming centuries, causing more than four metres of additional sea level rise. Greenland's ice loss has already committed around 30cm to sea level rise.</p> <p>The UN recently warned there is "no credible pathway" to governments keeping temperatures below an agreed threshold of a 1.5C (2.7F) increase, with 2.5C (4.5F), or possibly more now likely by the end of the century. Such a scenario could raise sea levels by up to 20 metres, although over hundreds of years. Such an outcome would prove "irreversible" on human timescales and pose an existential threat to low-lying countries and coastal communities.</p> <p>"The costs to places like Florida and Bangladesh and the Nile delta are just enormous, it's going to be a huge strain," said Brigham-Grette, who added that the Arctic is now shifting towards a state not seen in 3</p>

	<p>million years. “We can’t allow ourselves to get to such a place but what worries me is we won’t respond to this emergency until it is front of us.”</p> <p>The Arctic is heating up around four times as quickly as the global average, which, combined with record heatwaves in Antarctica, risks a rapid “meltwater pulse” not seen at any time in the past 130,000 years, during which time human civilization has developed. This surge in water could prove disastrous for coastal areas.</p> <p>Meanwhile, glaciers in places such as the Himalayas and the Andes are winnowing away, risking the drinking water supplies of tens of millions of people and, conversely, raising the threat of disastrous flooding. Brigham-Grette said even worse impacts can still be averted by reduced emissions, however, and urged governments gathered at Cop27 to do more to save the world’s bodies of ice.</p> <p>“Rapid decarbonization is absolutely essential, it’s a moral obligation to the future,” she said. “If we don’t accept that moral responsibility we aren’t going to be very good ancestors, we won’t be looked upon fondly. It will be a human tragedy.”</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 November hurricane in Florida unusual?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/17/us/november-hurricane-florida.html
GIST	<p>The latest forecasts from the National Hurricane Center make it clear that this week a storm with hurricane-force winds could be menacing the east coast of Florida.</p> <p>Just a reminder: It’s November.</p> <p>And yes, the official Atlantic hurricane season runs through Nov. 30. But that doesn’t mean that Subtropical Storm Nicole, as the system was named on Monday, wouldn’t be a rare event if it strengthened to hurricane status over warm waters near the Bahamas and hit the United States — an outcome the forecast says is likely.</p> <p>Here are some of the ways that a Hurricane Nicole would be unusual, according to Phil Klotzbach, a senior research scientist at Colorado State University who studies hurricanes and their history:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year would tie the record set in 2001 for the most Atlantic hurricane formations in November, at three. • If it were to make landfall in Florida at hurricane strength, Nicole would be the second-latest hurricane ever to hit the continental United States, after only Hurricane Kate, which made landfall in 1985 along the Florida Panhandle as a Category 2 hurricane. • It would be the latest recorded landfall ever for a hurricane on the east coast of Florida. <p>Even if the storm doesn’t make it to hurricane strength, Dr. Klotzbach said that if Nicole sticks to forecasts, it “would still be the strongest tropical storm to make landfall along the Florida east coast this late in the calendar year on record.”</p> <p>Forecasters issued a hurricane watch on Monday for parts of the east coast of Florida. John Cangialosi, a senior hurricane specialist at the National Hurricane Center, said in an interview that forecasters expected a small core of hurricane-force winds to develop near the center of Nicole and an expansive tropical storm-force wind field to stretch along the Florida and Georgia coasts.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Dungeness crab dying; climate change?
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/dungeness-crab-dying-amid-low-oxygen-levels-linked-to-climate-change/
GIST	Terry “Chop” Arnold Jr. remembers the first few times he climbed in his dad’s 36-foot fishing boat at an old log boom, near the northernmost tip of Washington.

“I started going out with him when I was 10,” said Arnold, a Makah tribal fisherman. “And I never looked back.”

For decades, Chinook salmon were plentiful along the beach, he said. But in the ‘90s, the Arnolds had to troll as far as 30 miles offshore to find fish.

Fishing for many species has proved pretty steady over the years for Arnold. But lately, there have been seasons where there’s little or no crab, he said.

Not too far down the coast, piles of dead Dungeness crab washed ashore on Kalaloch Beach this summer. Meanwhile, fishers have shared stories about hoisting up dead or suffocating crabs in their pots, said Jenny Waddell, research ecologist with the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

Now, scientists are working to understand how climate change is affecting Dungeness crab, which is both culturally significant and a [pillar of Washington’s seafood industry](#). From 2014 to 2019, coast-caught Dungeness was worth an annual average of \$45 million.

Last week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced a \$4.2 million award for a four-year study on Dungeness crab and krill that will bring together researchers and experts from coastal tribes, public universities and federal agencies from Northern California to Washington.

Climate change has been exacerbating existing marine environmental stressors through changes in temperatures, ocean chemistry and seasonal cycles.

The ocean absorbs about 30% of the carbon dioxide released in the atmosphere, primarily from human activity. Increases in the gas in the ocean have led to rising acidity. Studies have shown as acidity rises, shellfish struggle to maintain hardy shells, their growth slows, and death rates rise.

Over the last 20 years, the Olympic Coast sanctuary in Washington has monitored a changing marine environment. Where there’s typically vertical mixing to distribute nutrients, at times ocean waters have become stratified, trapping oxygen-deficient, acidic waters against the seafloor, Waddell said.

Marine animals need oxygen to survive.

Along the Pacific coast, Dungeness crab live in the intertidal zone out to a depth of about 560 feet. Washington’s coastal commercial crab fishing ground spans from the Columbia River to Cape Flattery near Neah Bay.

There’s plenty of research and real-world evidence that confirms climate change is hurting marine species, said Jack Barth, executive director of the Marine Studies Initiative at Oregon State University.

About a decade ago, OSU researchers confirmed that an increase in ocean acidification was definitively related to the collapse of oyster seed growth at a commercial oyster hatchery.

Meanwhile, harmful algal blooms have led to complete and partial closures of Dungeness crab fisheries up and down the West Coast. The blooms are rapidly growing bunches of algae that can produce dangerous toxins.

The Quileute Tribe declared a fishery resource disaster after an algal bloom [shut down their Dungeness harvest in 2015](#). Since then, they’ve used disaster relief funds to purchase instruments to measure current ocean conditions and start to piece together trends, said Jennifer Hagen, Quileute Tribe marine policy adviser.

The blob, a marine heat wave that wreaked havoc on Northwest fisheries during 2015 and 2016, led to [sea bird die-off](#), poor salmon returns and dozens of closures.

“We’ve had these catastrophic events like the heat blob and things that are showing us that things are changing,” Hagen said, “and they’re not changing incrementally.”

But scientists still don’t have a good handle on how organisms are affected by multiple stressors. What happens when crabs are faced with algal blooms, low oxygen and warm water?

Researchers hope to start to figure that out in the next four years.

They plan to map out where the lowest concentrations of oxygen lie and where the warm water is, and find where these stressors intersect to make life even more hostile for the species, said Richard Feely, senior scientist at NOAA’s Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory.

They’ll collect and synthesize historic and present-day data, and traditional ecological knowledge from coastal tribes, with that of academic and federal research institutions.

“We can have a voice,” said Hagen, the Quileute biologist, “where we can take our knowledge — because we’re here, we exist here in this area on the crab grounds — and that knowledge is being given value.”

The Quileute tribe sent a letter in support of the research proposal, and Hagen said she hopes they can be deeply involved.

“I just think that’s a nice addition not only because it connects with the coastal people who have been here forever,” Barth said, “but our instrumental records only go back 50, 60 years. So we’re looking for a collaborative effort, with their knowledge of the changing seasons, where and when they’ve been able to make good use of the fishery.”

The research will combine data, modeling and laboratory experiments to paint a better picture of where the effects of climate change overlap, the causes and the biological impacts when combined, Feely said, in an aim to help inform future fishery practices.

The research is welcome for people like Arnold, the Makah fisherman, who rely on the ocean for sustenance.

“We’re all connected by water, some way, somehow,” Arnold said. “And the ocean is probably the most important aspect of life for us. If we start losing it, it could be devastating.”

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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	11/07 US charges Haiti gang leaders: kidnappings
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/haiti-kidnappings-justice-department/2022/11/07/id/1095225/
GIST	<p>Criminal charges have been filed against leaders of five notorious Haitian gangs, including gang leaders involved in the horrifying kidnappings of more than a dozen Christian missionaries a year ago, the Department of Justice announced Monday.</p> <p>In a statement, Attorney General Merrick Garland declared, "When a U.S. citizen is kidnapped abroad, the Justice Department will bring to bear the full reach of our law enforcement authorities to ensure their safe return home and to hold accountable those responsible."</p> <p>"We are committed to working alongside our interagency and international partners to disrupt these kidnapping-for-ransom schemes that endanger the lives of American citizens and that fuel the violent gangs harming the Haitian people," he added.</p>

The 16 victims of the Oct. 16, 2021, kidnappings were [missionaries](#) serving near Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and most of them were held captive for 61 days before escaping. The group included five children — one just 8 months old, the DOJ reported.

Along with the announcement of charges, the DOJ announced a whopping \$3 million reward for information leading to the capture of three defendants who are believed to still be in Haiti.

Also, along with the indictments for the kidnappings, the DOJ said it filed charges against four other Haitian nationals who head the gangs responsible for two other kidnappings of U.S. citizens in Haiti.

"The charges unsealed today are a reminder of the FBI's ability to reach criminal actors overseas when crimes are committed against U.S. citizens," said FBI Director Christopher Wray. "The FBI, with our federal and international partners, will continue to pursue anyone who targets Americans for hostage taking or other violent crimes — wherever they are."

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HEADLINE	11/07 Ex-military pilot jailed: paid agent for China
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/intelligence/former-u-s-military-pilot-sentenced-for-acting-as-paid-agent-for-china-and-lying-on-national-security-background-forms/
GIST	<p>Former U.S. Army helicopter pilot-turned-civilian-contractor Shapour Moinian, 67, of San Diego, was sentenced in federal court today to 20 months in prison for acting as an agent of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and accepting thousands of dollars from representatives of the Chinese government to provide aviation-related information from his defense-contractor employers.</p> <p>According to court documents, Moinian served in the U.S. Army in the United States, Germany and South Korea from approximately 1977 through 2000. After his service, Moinian worked for various cleared defense contractors in the United States – including in San Diego – as well as the Department of Defense. “Cleared” is a term that indicates a contractor is permitted to work on projects that involve classified information.</p> <p>According to his plea agreement, while Moinian was working for a cleared defense contractor, or CDC, on various aviation projects used by the military and U.S. intelligence agencies, he was contacted by an individual in China who claimed to be working for a technical recruiting company. This person offered Moinian the opportunity to consult for the aviation industry in China.</p> <p>In March 2017, Moinian traveled to Hong Kong where he met with this purported recruiter and agreed to provide information and materials related to multiple types of aircraft designed and/or manufactured in the United States in exchange for money. Moinian accepted approximately \$7,000-\$10,000 in U.S. currency during that meeting. According to his plea agreement, at this meeting and at all subsequent meetings, Moinian knew that these individuals were employed or directed by the PRC.</p> <p>Upon returning to the United States, Moinian began gathering aviation-related materials, which included transferring material from a CDC to a thumb drive. In September 2017, Moinian traveled overseas and, during a stopover at the Shanghai airport, met with Chinese government officials and provided aviation-related materials on a thumb drive, including proprietary information from a CDC. Thereafter, Moinian arranged to be paid for this information through the South Korean bank account of his stepdaughter. Moinian told his stepdaughter that these funds were payment for his consulting work overseas and instructed her to transfer the funds to him in multiple transactions.</p> <p>Moinian also received a cell phone and other equipment from these individuals to communicate with them and aid in the electronic transfer of materials and information.</p> <p>At the end of March 2018, Moinian traveled to Bali and met with these same individuals again. Later that year, he began working at another CDC. During this timeframe, the same individuals in China transferred</p>

	<p>thousands of dollars into the South Korean bank account of Moinian's stepdaughter, who subsequently wired the funds to Moinian in multiple transactions.</p> <p>In August 2019, Moinian traveled again to Hong Kong and met with these same individuals where he was again paid approximately \$22,000 in cash for his services. Moinian and his wife smuggled this cash back into the United States.</p> <p>According to his plea agreement, Moinian also admitted that he lied on his government background questionnaires in July 2017 and March 2020, when he falsely stated that did not have any close or continuing contacts with foreign nationals and that no foreign national had offered him a job.</p> <p>Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Division, U.S. Attorney Randy Grossman for the Southern District of California and Assistant Director Alan E. Kohler Jr. of the FBI's of the Counterintelligence Division made the announcement.</p> <p>The FBI and Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigated the case.</p> <p>Assistant U.S. Attorneys Fred Sheppard and John Parmley for the Southern District of California and Trial Attorney Menno Goodman of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section prosecuted the case.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Guilty plea: interstate threats, hate crime
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/washington-man-pleads-guilty-to-calling-buffalo-grocery-stores-and-threatening-to-shoot-black-people/
GIST	<p>A Washington man pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Seattle to making interstate threats and committing a hate crime for interference with a federally protected activity. The defendant has been in federal custody since his arrest on July 22.</p> <p>According to the plea agreement, Joey David George, 37, of Lynwood, telephoned multiple grocery stores in Buffalo, New York, and threatened to shoot Black people in the stores. George told the staff at the store to "take him seriously," and ordered the store to clear out the customers, as he was "nearby" and "preparing to shoot all Black customers." One store closed. The threats followed a racially-motivated shooting at another Buffalo grocery store in May. Law enforcement traced the phone number and identified George as the person who made the call.</p> <p>In addition to the calls to Buffalo, George admits that in May, he called a restaurant in San Bruno, California. In that call, George allegedly threatened to shoot Black and Hispanic patrons in the restaurant. He told law enforcement that he made the threat to strike fear in the Bay Area Black community.</p> <p>On Sept. 11, 2021, George called a cannabis dispensary in Rockville, Maryland, and used racial slurs as he threatened to shoot and kill Black people at the business. George admitted his racial hate to local law enforcement who used caller ID to trace the call. The dispensary shut down and hired extra security, causing a loss of over \$50,000. George also called a Denny's restaurant in Enfield, Connecticut, and threatened Black patrons at the restaurant on the same day.</p> <p>In his plea agreement George admitted he made threatening telephone calls from at or near his home in Lynnwood, to grocery stores in Buffalo, New York, restaurants in California and Connecticut, and a marijuana dispensary in Maryland. Sentencing is scheduled in front of U.S. District Judge Ricardo S. Martinez on Dec.16.</p> <p>In his plea agreement George agrees to pay restitution to the impacted businesses.</p> <p>Making interstate threats is punishable by up to five years in prison. Interfering with a federally protected activity is punishable by up to 10 years in prison.</p>

	<p>Prosecutors have agreed to limit their sentencing recommendation to the high end of the federal sentencing guidelines range. Judge Martinez is not bound by prosecutors' recommendations and can impose any sentence up to the 10-year statutory maximum after considering the sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors.</p> <p>Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, U.S. Attorney Nick Brown for the Western District of Washington and Special Agent in Charge Richard A. Collodi of the FBI Seattle Field Office made the announcement.</p> <p>The FBI Seattle Field Office investigated the case, with the assistance of multiple local police departments. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Thomas Woods and Rebecca Cohen for the Western District of Washington prosecuted the case in consultation with the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Violent carjacking spree Bellevue, Seattle
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3700993/two-carjackings-shooting-done-by-one-man-police-say/
GIST	<p>Police said a robbery at a Bellevue Square parking garage led to two carjackings and a shooting before the suspect was arrested.</p> <p>It all began with a reported purse snatching in Bellevue.</p> <p>After firing two rounds, the suspect fled the scene in a stolen BMW and drove across 520 to Seattle.</p> <p>Snohomish County Investigators bust man with massive stash of firearms</p> <p>He dumped the car at a Starbucks on Eastlake near Lynn Street.</p> <p>Police say he ran to a nearby apartment building garage, shot the owner of an SUV in the leg, and took off.</p> <p>That's when officers were called to the 2300 block of Eastlake Ave. East around 1 p.m.</p> <p>They found a 38-year-old man with a gunshot to his lower leg.</p> <p>The victim told officers an unidentified man had stolen his car and shot him before fleeing.</p> <p>"I saw the Cherokee coming down the streets. It hit the cones and they almost hit me," an eyewitness told KIRO Newsradio. "I had to help pick up the cones and I thought it was a stolen car for sure."</p> <p>While investigating this carjacking, police discovered that the suspect was also wanted in an earlier armed carjacking in Bellevue.</p> <p>They were able to find the man but the investigation continues.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Prolific car thief in multiple crimes
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/video-shows-prolific-car-thief-almost-hit-washington-state-patrol-detective
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. - Surveillance video in Tacoma shows the lengths 35-year-old Samantha Eazor was willing to go to escape arrest.</p> <p>When detectives on the Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force approached her vehicle in Tacoma, she drove into a 7-Eleven, a Redbox movie rental machine and a dumpster before backing into someone's car to turn around. Ignoring commands by officers to stop, she drove forward and almost hit a WSP detective.</p>

Eazor was wanted for multiple crimes including home burglary and truck theft after breaking into a man's house in Tacoma while he was asleep. His truck was later found stripped and trashed in Fife.

Eazor was eventually arrested in Puyallup after someone spotted her at Safeway. She had dyed her hair pink and was wearing a wig as a disguise. The wig fell off when she tried to get away.

During her time on the run, Eazor also stole a U-haul pickup truck and fled from an officer. A Jury convicted Eazor for Assault 2. It would have been 1st Degree assault but one of the 12 jurors wouldn't agree on that charge. She also pleaded guilty to multiple charges of theft, ID theft and forgery.

On October 14, she was sentenced to serve 7 years in prison. That's the chaos caused by just one car thief out of many and shows the combined effort it takes right now to hold criminals accountable.

The Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force says there were more than 31,000 vehicles reported stolen through September of this year compared to 33,499 in all of 2021. At that rate, the total number of thefts may top 40,000 by the end of this year.

As the weather gets colder, it's a good reminder not to start your vehicle to warm it up and then leave it running while you go back inside. Stay with your running vehicle.

A surprising number of cars are stolen that way. Always lock your doors and roll up your windows. Never leave any valuables in the car and park in a well-lit area. Ford F-series trucks are especially vulnerable to theft so make sure you install a hidden kill switch, a GPS tracking device, a steering wheel lock or remove the battery.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Trying to curb catalytic converter thefts
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/using-technology-curb-catalytic-converter-thefts/LCPNFKGSW5DBBC34PSAIAFZXNM/
GIST	<p>Technology is being used to curb the tampering and theft of catalytic converters from vehicles.</p> <p>A recent survey puts Washington near the top of a dubious list. According to State Farm, Washington ranked as the state with the fourth-most catalytic converter thefts. Catalytic converters, which deal with emissions, have precious metals that are sought after and can lead to expensive repair costs. The issue has also created a wave of theft and vandalism. Car owners can often be on the hook for thousands of dollars in repairs, while car dealers are in a similar situation since a damaged vehicle can't be sold until repairs are made, creating the potential for costs to be passed on to consumers.</p> <p>In a bid to help dealers, ACV Auctions, an online auto auction company, created proprietary technology to try to help dealers. The situation surrounding catalytic converters has forced many parties to develop new and creative ways to fight losing the systems to theft. ACV Auctions created what's called a "virtual lift system," which scans the bottom of the vehicle and gives a clear picture of the condition of the catalytic converter. ACV's Senior Director of Research and Development Michael Pokora spoke to KIRO 7 and says the technology helps dealers get a true assessment of the vehicle conditions, and allows dealers to act accordingly. It also could prevent expensive repair costs for dealers, preventing those costs from being passed on to consumers.</p> <p>This is just one tool, however. KIRO 7 has seen other ways that groups are trying to fight and prevent catalytic converter theft. In October, Pierce County law enforcement, car dealerships and owners were part of an event where catalytic converters were engraved with Vehicle Identification Numbers, or VINs. The logic is that inscribing the ID number would make it riskier to steal the device and would also make it harder to sell the parts, since it has a clear connection to a vehicle that's owned by an individual or dealership.</p>

The issue of catalytic converter theft or vandalism has also lead to violence. In Newcastle this past July, King County sheriff's deputies say a man exchanged gunfire with people who were allegedly casing an apartment complex for catalytic converters. The man saw the group and confronted them, then one of the suspects opened fire and shot the man, according to deputies. That man returned fire and ended up hitting one of the suspects.

For ACV Auctions, trying to curb any concerns around catalytic converters starts with the process of dealers purchasing vehicles wholesale. Pokora said the company's proprietary technology, which images the bottom of vehicles and can detect any catalytic converter flaws, protects consumers and dealers involved in vehicle sales. "It helps consumers by helping dealerships as they acquire used inventory, understand the condition of the emissions systems in the vehicles; as they're getting inventory to resell to consumers, they're aware of the condition of the catalytic converter," said Pokora. When Pokora was asked whether the cost of repairs by dealers can be passed on to consumers, he affirmed that is sometimes the case and repairs can cost thousands of dollars. He stressed that emissions laws require cars to have catalytic converters, which means repairs are mandatory no matter what the cost.

In July, Washington enacted a new law to curb catalytic converter thefts. One aspect of the law requires scrap yards and auto wreckers to verify proof of ownership of the items. On the heels of that law, King County councilmember Reagan Dunn proposed an awareness campaign on catalytic converter thefts. In a statement regarding his proposal, which was posted on King County's website this past summer, Dunn cited statistics for the issue in the county. It said in King County alone, the incidence of stolen catalytic converters skyrocketed 12,855% between 2019 and 2021, according to data from the King County Sheriff's Office.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Killer confessed, fled now caught in Europe
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/man-accused-of-killing-wife-in-spokane-in-2019-captured-in-europe/
GIST	<p>A man suspected of killing his wife in 2019 and fleeing the country has been captured in Europe, the Spokane County Sheriff's Office announced on Monday.</p> <p>Wahid Kashify was arrested on Oct. 29 in Europe, where he is currently being held, the Sheriff's Office said.</p> <p>It could be a year or more before Kashify arrives in the United States, depending on whether he fights the extradition process, Detective Marc Melville said Monday during a news conference.</p> <p>Kashify will stand trial for a first-degree murder charge when he does arrive, the Sheriff's Office said.</p> <p>Arezu Kashify, who was 24 at the time of her death, was last seen alive on May 26, 2019, at a friend's house, according to the Sheriff's Office initial report. Her friend later reported her missing on May 30. Her remains were discovered in a false bottom of a chest freezer in the apartment she shared with her husband and their two children on June 4. Wahid Kashify is said to have dropped their two children, ages 5 and 1, off with a friend on May 26 after midnight.</p> <p>Deputies located his vehicle on June 1 at the Spokane airport, where he purchased a one-way ticket out of the country. Deputies located a letter inside of his vehicle that gave instructions to unlock his phone and watch a video confession.</p> <p>"He admitted to the homicide, he gave a full confession as to why he did it, and it's very telling," Melville said of the video, which has not been released to the public. "I think he felt he was going to get away with it and live free, just not in the United States."</p> <p>Homeland Security determined that Kashify left from the Spokane airport for Dubai, and ultimately arrived in Kabul, Afghanistan, on May 30.</p>

Kashify was scheduled to become a U.S. citizen the day after his wife's body was discovered, Melville said.

Afghanistan is a non-extradition country, which posed one of the biggest challenges to the Sheriff's Office, Melville said. Kashify also had extended family living in the country, he said, as well as connections from his time serving as a translator for the U.S. military.

Detective Melville said that the international investigation into Kashify's whereabouts began the same day that deputies discovered his wife's body. An FBI agent working in Afghanistan immediately got to work on the case after learning that Kashify may have fled to his home country, he said.

"During that process, we were able to determine he had multiple different aliases, he had got a new passport and a new name and using all that information we were able to get a 'red notice', which is a worldwide extradition warrant," Melville said.

Kashify is said to have traveled between Iran and Afghanistan, and then to Turkey and finally to Europe, where he was arrested.

Kashify, who was an avid volleyball player, had plans to attend a volleyball tournament in Europe on Oct. 29. That's when authorities located him leaving a men's locker room and arrested him, the Sheriff's Office said. The Sheriff's Office did not say which country Kashify was being held in because his extradition is still pending a hearing there.

Kashify's two children are said to be "safe and happy" together at a permanent residence in Washington state, Melville said.

"For 16 years you've heard me say this. If you commit a crime in Spokane County, we're gonna do everything we can to bring you to justice," Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich said at Monday's news conference.

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HEADLINE	11/07 Arrests: Patriot Front graffiti at Gonzaga
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/2-arrested-after-patriot-front-graffiti-found-at-gonzaga/
GIST	<p>Spokane police arrested two people who were allegedly vandalizing Gonzaga University property with graffiti associated with the white supremacist group Patriot Front, according to an email sent to Gonzaga staff Saturday night.</p> <p>A third person was also involved in the vandalism but was not arrested, the email said. None of the individuals were identified by police on Sunday.</p> <p>According to the email, students alerted campus authorities about the white supremacist graffiti on a mural wall, northwest of the Crosby Center, at about 7 p.m. Staff quickly painted over the graffiti, the email said.</p> <p>Campus security reviewed surveillance footage from the area and within the hour arrested two of the individuals responsible, the email said.</p> <p>Similar Patriot Front graffiti was discovered on Gonzaga's mural wall about two weeks before, on Oct. 25, as well as on the east side of the Monroe Street bridge. In a statement to the campus on the following day, Gonzaga President Thayne M. McCulloh affirmed the university's commitment to combating hate.</p> <p>"We cannot be complacent in our commitment; we cannot assume that stamping out racism — or any other act or expression of prejudice, be it based on race, ethnicity, sex, faith or religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, age, or veteran status — is someone else's responsibility," he wrote then. "We are all responsible, each of us, every day."</p>

	<p>According to the student-run Gonzaga Bulletin, students repainted the wall this past Friday with the message, “We reside on Native land.”</p> <p>Patriot Front made national headlines in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, on June 11 after 31 of its members, including its 23-year-old leader, were arrested for conspiracy to riot while en route to a North Idaho Pride celebration. The group is perhaps most well known for spreading patriotic-themed racist propaganda in various cities and for its large flash mob-style demonstrations.</p> <p>The trial dates for the 31 Patriot Front members who were arrested in Coeur d’Alene have been continuously rescheduled since September.</p> <p>The group, which is based in Texas, was sued last month by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law for conspiracy to violate civil rights under the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 after the group shared images of its members vandalizing a mural in a historically Black community in Richmond, Virginia, in October 2021 on social media.</p>
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HEADLINE	11/07 Parkland pipe bomb found; threats made
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article268416102.html
GIST	<p>Pierce County deputies responded last weekend to a report of a pipe bomb found near a store. Deputies were also called for a bomb threat, but it appears to have been more of a customer service nightmare than threat to public safety.</p> <p>On Saturday morning, a bomb technician with Pierce County Sheriff’s Department deputies went to a Parkland auto parts store in the 14900 block of Pacific Avenue South after an employee found a metal pipe capped at both ends and wrapped in tape.</p> <p>According to the Sheriff’s Department, the employee was cleaning up garbage left behind by “transients” when he found the suspicious item in a duffle bag. Deputies said the bomb technician brought the item to the department’s firing range and determined it was a fully functioning homemade pipe bomb. The device would have had a blast similar to that of a grenade, deputies said.</p> <p>The device was rendered safe, and deputies examined it for evidence. The Sheriff’s Department advised that suspicious items should be reported to 911.</p> <p>BOMB THREAT IN SOUTH HILL</p> <p>On Sunday, deputies responded at about 8 a.m. to a store in the 16500 block of Meridian Avenue East where a man was trying to return a cell phone at customer service.</p> <p>Deputies said an employee told the man he had the wrong receipt so the return couldn’t be accepted. The man left and returned an hour later. Again, the man had the wrong receipt and the employee refused to process the return. Deputies said the man became angry and threatened to blow up the store. A manager reportedly questioned the man about the threat, who said blowing up the store was a promise, not a threat.</p> <p>The man left, and employees called 911. Sheriff’s Department spokesperson Sgt. Darren Moss said the store wasn’t closed as a result of the threat, and the man didn’t have anything dangerous in his possession. He said the case had not yet been assigned.</p>
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